



This is a digital copy of a book that was preserved for generations on library shelves before it was carefully scanned by Google as part of a project to make the world's books discoverable online.

It has survived long enough for the copyright to expire and the book to enter the public domain. A public domain book is one that was never subject to copyright or whose legal copyright term has expired. Whether a book is in the public domain may vary country to country. Public domain books are our gateways to the past, representing a wealth of history, culture and knowledge that's often difficult to discover.

Marks, notations and other marginalia present in the original volume will appear in this file - a reminder of this book's long journey from the publisher to a library and finally to you.

### Usage guidelines

Google is proud to partner with libraries to digitize public domain materials and make them widely accessible. Public domain books belong to the public and we are merely their custodians. Nevertheless, this work is expensive, so in order to keep providing this resource, we have taken steps to prevent abuse by commercial parties, including placing technical restrictions on automated querying.

We also ask that you:

- + *Make non-commercial use of the files* We designed Google Book Search for use by individuals, and we request that you use these files for personal, non-commercial purposes.
- + *Refrain from automated querying* Do not send automated queries of any sort to Google's system: If you are conducting research on machine translation, optical character recognition or other areas where access to a large amount of text is helpful, please contact us. We encourage the use of public domain materials for these purposes and may be able to help.
- + *Maintain attribution* The Google "watermark" you see on each file is essential for informing people about this project and helping them find additional materials through Google Book Search. Please do not remove it.
- + *Keep it legal* Whatever your use, remember that you are responsible for ensuring that what you are doing is legal. Do not assume that just because we believe a book is in the public domain for users in the United States, that the work is also in the public domain for users in other countries. Whether a book is still in copyright varies from country to country, and we can't offer guidance on whether any specific use of any specific book is allowed. Please do not assume that a book's appearance in Google Book Search means it can be used in any manner anywhere in the world. Copyright infringement liability can be quite severe.

### About Google Book Search

Google's mission is to organize the world's information and to make it universally accessible and useful. Google Book Search helps readers discover the world's books while helping authors and publishers reach new audiences. You can search through the full text of this book on the web at <http://books.google.com/>





153  
+9

XM 55.3 [Drg]

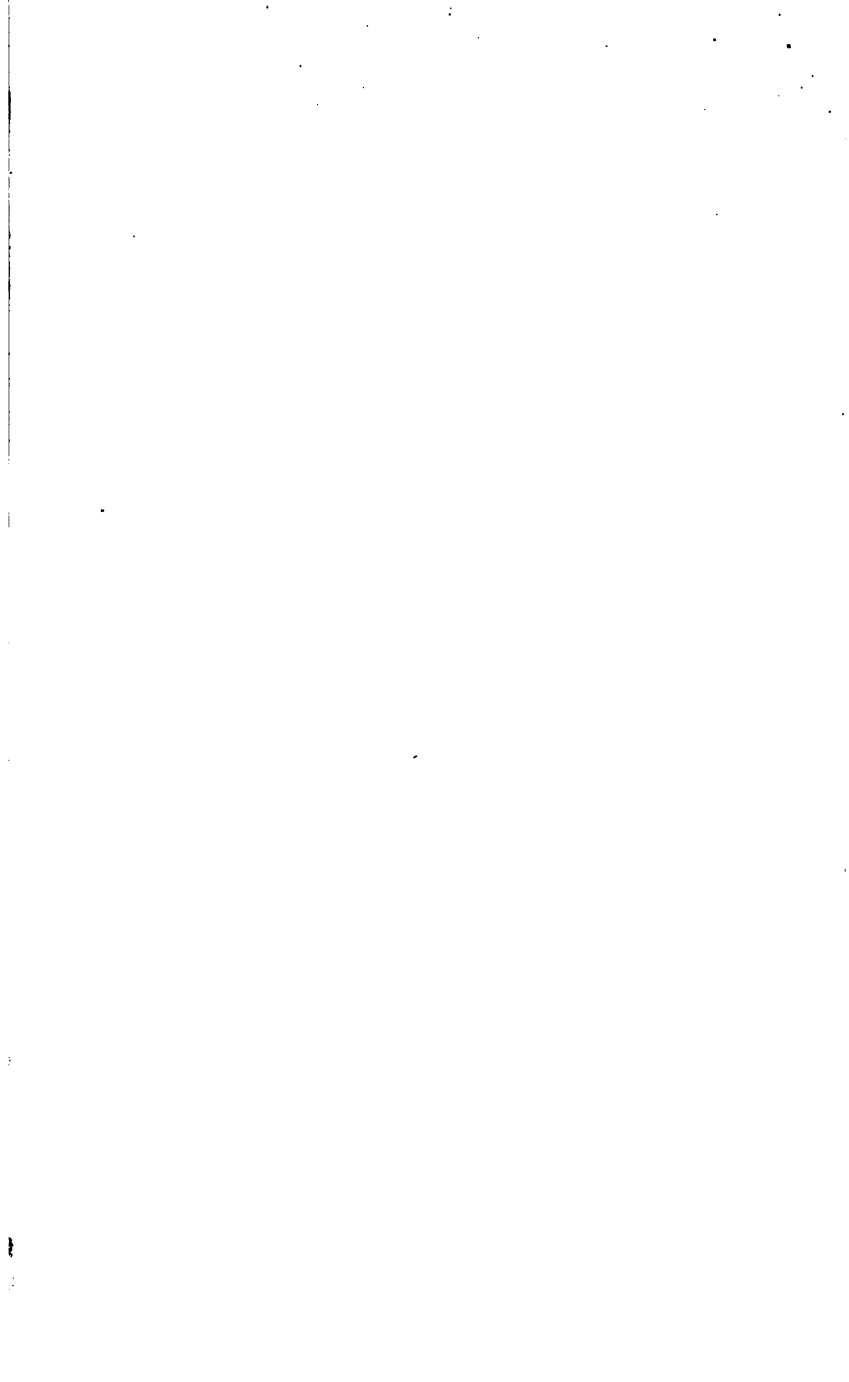
F7

collected complete

C/-  
5/6

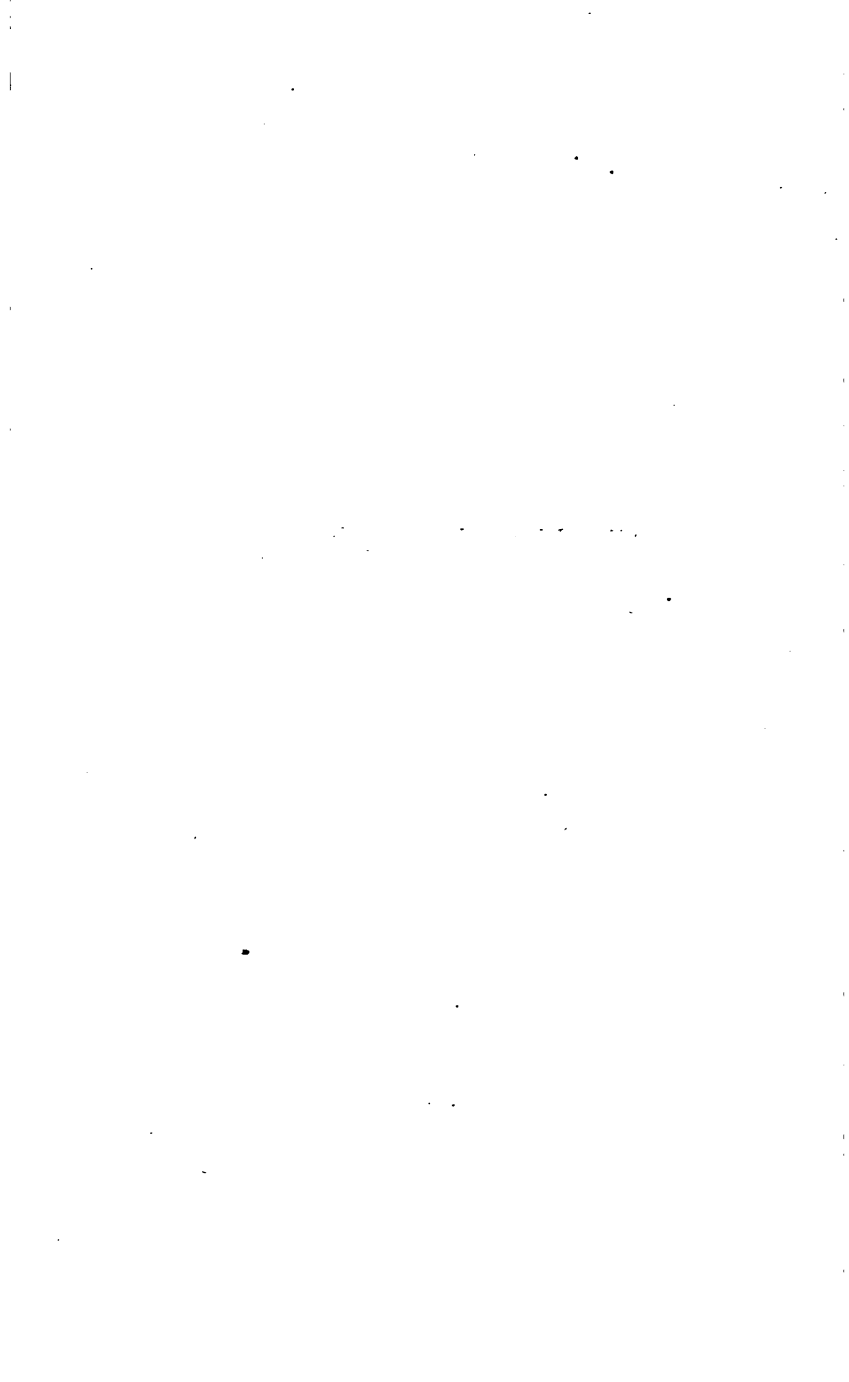


300150773Q

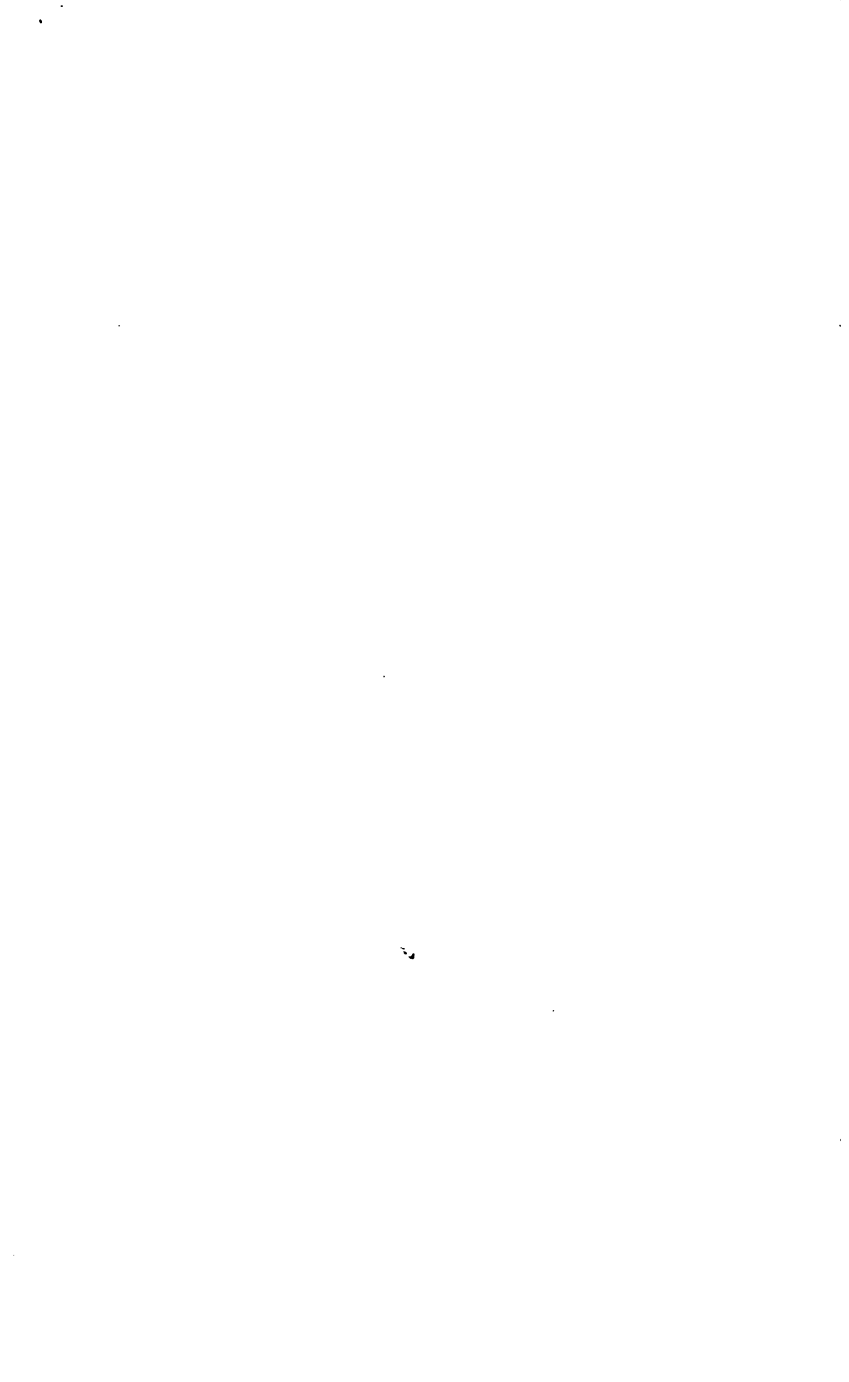


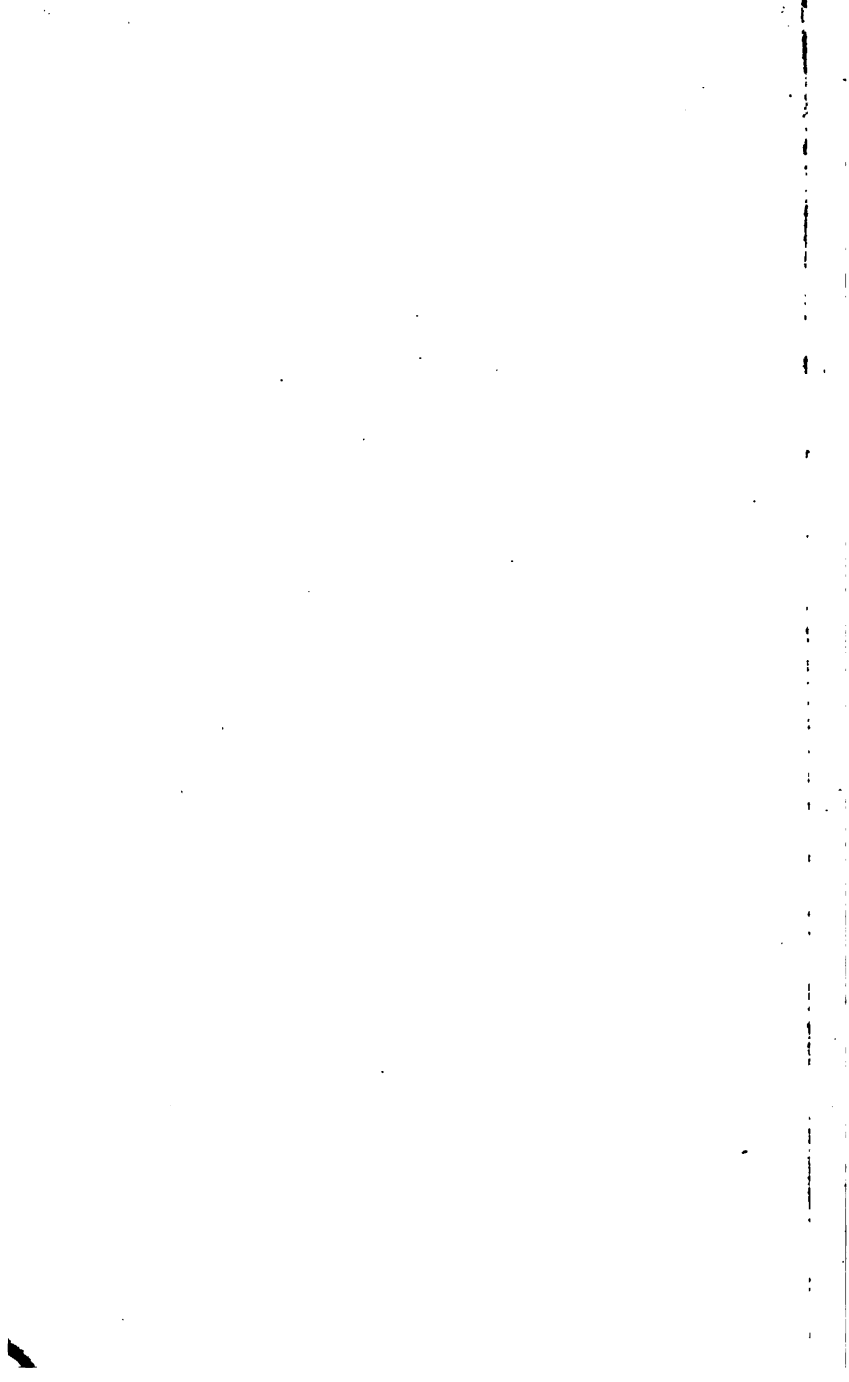
**DRAMATIC SCÈNES,**

**8c.**









# **Dramatic Scenes,**

**SONNETS,**

**AND OTHER POEMS.**

**BY**

**MARY RUSSELL MITFORD,**

**AUTHOR OF FOSCARI, JULIAN, AND OUR VILLAGE.**

**LONDON:**

**GEO. B. WHITTAKER,**

**AVE-MARIA LANE.**

---

**1827.**

**LONDON:**

**PRINTED BY R. GILBERT,  
ST. JOHN'S SQUARE.**

• TO  
.

HER KIND AND EARLY FRIEND,

WILLIAM CHAMBERLAYNE, ESQ. M.P.

**This Volume**

IS RESPECTFULLY INSCRIBED,

BY

THE AUTHOR.



# CONTENTS.

---

## DRAMATIC SCENES.

	PAGE
CUNIGUNDA'S VOW .....	1
THE FAWN.....	27
THE WEDDING RING .....	57
EMILY .....	83
THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTER .....	107
FAIR ROSAMOND .....	138
ALICE.....	163
HENRY TALBOT.....	185
THE SIEGE.....	219
THE BRIDAL EVE .....	249
THE CAPTIVE .....	269
MASQUE OF THE SEASONS.....	283

---

SONNETS.....	291
SONGS.....	317
ANTIGONE .....	327
INDEPENDENCE .....	337
WATLINGTON HILL .....	345
WESTON GROVE .....	373





## **DRAMATIC SCENES.**



# CUNIGUNDA'S VOW.

A DRAMATIC SCENE.



The story which forms the groundwork of the following short drama, will be found in Mr. Russell's delightful volumes on Germany ; it has also given occasion to a very spirited ballad by Miss Landen, inserted, if I mistake not, in my friend Mr. Watts's *Literary Souvenir* for 1826.

## CHARACTERS.

CUNIGUNDA, *Lady of the Kienast.*

SIR ALBERT, *a stranger Knight.*

ERNEST, *Cunigunda's aged Seneschal.*

GERTRUDE, } *Her waiting women.*

EDITHA, }

OTTO, *her page.*

*Squires, pages, grooms, and waiting women.*

SCENE, *a hall in the Castle of the Kienast in Silesia.*

## CUNIGUNDA'S VOW.

---

*Enter ERNEST, to GERTRUDE and EDITHA.*

*Ernest.* Where is thy lady, Gertrude ?

*Gertrude.*

On the turret

Watching the first glimpse of the stranger knight

Who comes to-day to attempt the perilous feat

Ordained by her rash vow.

*Editha.*

Poor Cunigunda !

Now pays she dearly the o'erweening pride

Of haughty beauty. Love hath well avenged

His martyred votaries.

*Ernest.*

Speak not with that tone

Of pity, maiden ! I'm an old retainer

Of Cunigunda's house ; have carried her

A smiling child within mine arms ; have loved her  
Even as a father, as a father gloried  
In her unparagoned charms. But her cold cruelty  
Doth fret my very heart-strings. Not enough  
For this proud beauty to reject all hearts  
Of knight, or count, or prince,—for princes sued  
At Cunigunda's feet—but she must tempt  
Each wooer to his death, grim ghastly death,  
Untimely bloody death, by that stern vow  
That he should win her, who should safely ride  
Around these Kienast walls,—the narrow walls,  
Of these steep mountain towers ! She might as well  
Command them ride upon a falchion's edge,  
Or stand erect upon the topmost spray  
Of yon tall poplar. Many a gallant steed  
Lies whitening in the abyss, many a brave knight  
Hath perished in the rocky gulph ;—and now  
Another victim comes !

*Editha.*

One—If he fall,  
The shades of all that for her sake have died,

Were they as countless as the leaves that dance  
In Hirschsberg vale, would be avenged ! She loves him,  
Believe it, Ernest, with the fervid love  
Of stern and haughty hearts.

*Ernest.* Believe who will !

She, thy proud mistress, love the falcon knight !  
Albert the falcon knight ! A wandering stranger,  
Whose house, whose name she knows not. Tush !

*Editha.* Yet Albert

Is the sole name she speaks ; the falcon crest  
Her only heraldry.

*Ernest.* Princes have sighed

For Cunigunda, and that she should sigh  
For this poor knight—

*Gertrude* She doth !

*Ernest.* One all unapt

To win a lady's eye ! She that beheld  
Unmoved the gay Count Cassel, whose light step  
Came bounding like the roe, whose glance shot fire,—  
She that beheld unshaken his bright form

Lie stiff and mute before her,—she that saw,  
Without a tear, the bleeding mangled corse  
Of Rudolf of Thuringia, blooming boy,  
Fair, slender, blue-eyed boy, whose nut-brown curls  
Clustered o'er his white brow, whose damask cheek,  
And coral lip, and brilliant smile, and round  
And joyous voice were redolent of youth,  
And hope, and life ;—think'st thou that she, whom bloom  
And charms like these ne'er touched, can love yon sad  
And pallid stranger ?

*Editha.*                      With idolatry,  
Passing what hath been told or feigned of love  
In story or in song.    Unapt to win  
A lady's eye !    Ernest, thou hast been trained  
In courts, and camps, and battles ; thou know'st well  
All that pertains to man, but woman's heart  
To thee is a sealed book.    I tell thee, Ernest,  
Yon pallid stranger, with the serious grace  
Of his fine features, delicate yet full  
Of mild command ; the dark locks closely shorn



Around the noble head ; the manly form  
Where grandeur blends with elegance ; the voice  
Clear, deep, and ringing, fitting instrument  
Of lofty thought ; the reverential port  
Majestically bending with a proud  
And prompt obedience, to the very name  
Of woman rendering homage ;—such an one  
Might win—

*Gertrude.* She comes !

*Enter CUNIGUNDA and OTTO.*

*Cunigunda.* Unbar the gates ! Be quick,  
Unbar the gates ! Why bide ye loitering here  
When ye should fly to bid the Castellan  
Give present entrance to the falcon knight—  
The valiant falcon knight ?

*[Exit ERNEST.*

Ye dally here,  
Whilst he stands waiting,—he ! Why of themselves  
The Kienast gates should ope to him.

*Otto.* He's here,  
*Fair Madam.*

*Enter SIR ALBERT and a PAGE.*

*Cunigunda.* Now, Sir Albert !

*Albert.* Beauteous lady,  
I come to win thee.—Bid them lead my courser  
Round to the court of guard. Is't not the way  
That we must gain the ramparts ?

[*Exit PAGE.*

Sweet, I come  
To win thee or to perish.

*Cunigunda.* Oh, No! No!

*Albert.* Why, thou shouldst arm me for this viewless  
peril

As for some tourney fray. Why dost thou sigh ?  
Why turn so deadly pale ?

*Cunigunda.* 'Tis a vast peril !

*Albert.* 'Twas thine own vow imposed it ; thine own  
choice ;

And now 'tis mine. I knew afore I saw thee  
What danger must be dared for Cunigunda,  
And knowing came. Thou wouldst not sure fright me  
With that same bugbear Peril? I'm a warrior  
Trained to defy, to seek each several form  
Of death in glorious battle. Wouldst thou teach me  
A cowardice now?—Farewell!—The sun shines bright  
On hill and valley; the soft breezes play  
O'er leaf and flower; over our heads the lark  
Chaunts his gay matins; Nature smiles on me  
And my high purpose;—for this deed is holy,  
Thrice holy, lady!—When I come again—  
Farewell!

*Cunigunda.* Oh go not! go not!

*Albert.*

*Cunigunda*

Hast thou not sworn to yield thy hand to none,  
Save him who rides unscathed around these steep  
And narrow walls? Is not that oath proclaimed  
On earth, and registered in heaven?

*Cunigunda.*

*Alas!*

*Albert.* And I too have a vow recorded there  
To do this deed or perish.

*Cunigunda.* Oh, go not!  
Not yet! not yet!

*Albert.* Why should I dally?

*Cunigunda.* Stay  
A month, a little month! Thou wilt not? Then  
A week, a day, an hour! Grant but such respite  
As the poor sentenced criminal may claim  
When he craves time for prayer.—Oh, go not yet!  
Not yet! not yet!

*Albert.* Is this the soft relenting  
Of woman's tender heart to all whom pain  
Or danger threaten? Didst thou thus implore  
Henry of Cassel? or the gentle boy  
Young Rudolf of Thuringia?

*Cunigunda.* No. Oh, frown not,  
Nor turn away thy head, nor snatch thy hand  
From mine! They knew the peril that they braved,  
And they would brave that peril. Canst thou blame me

That I ne'er loved afore ? that I love now ?

Oh, go not, Albert !

*Albert.* Lady I am bound

By a strong fettering vow.—If I return

This hand is mine ?

*Cunigunda.* Ay, hand and heart. Yet go not !

Beseech thee, stay with me !

*Albert.* When I come back

Thou art wholly mine ?

*Cunigunda.* Ay ; ay. But go not yet !

*Albert.* Mine to dispose even as I will ?

*Cunigunda.* Ay, dearest,

Even as thou wilt. But stay with me awhile !

Stay ! stay !

[*Exit* ALBERT.]

*Editha.* He's gone !

*Cunigunda.* Oh, stop him ! Say I beg !

Say I command ! Fly ! fly !

[*Exit* OTTO.]

And yet my oath,

My fatal, fatal oath ! Without such trial  
We may not wed—But, oh, to see him dashed,  
As they have been, from off the wall and lain  
A pale disfigured corse—Oh horror ! horror !

*Re-enter OTTO.*

Stop him, I say ; and if need be by force.

Command him hither.

*Otto.*                      *Lady*——

*Cunigunda.*                      Dost thou hear ?

Where is the falcon knight ? Am I not mistress  
Within these towers ? Command him hither.

*Otto.*    *Lady,*

Even as he left thee, at a bound he sprang  
On his proud steed, and scaled the rampart stairs ;  
Ere now he's on the walls.

*Cunigunda.*                      Oh save him ! save him,  
Ye saints that watch o'er love ! Go some of ye  
To the high turret that o'erhangs the Castle,  
And look ye send me blessed tidings—no !

The truth ! the very truth ! Are ye not gone ?

[*Exeunt OTTO and GERTRUDE.*

*Editha.* Wilt thou not go thyself ? 'Twere a less  
grief

Than crouching there in that strong agony  
Of fear—thy head between thy hands, thy limbs  
Shivering, thy bosom panting. Go !

*Cunigunda.* He'll die !

He'll die ! And how could I endure—He'll die  
For me ! for me !

*Editha.* Take comfort, lady.

*Cunigunda.* Comfort !

Who ever passed that dread abyss, where yawns  
The Hirschberg valley under the high rock  
Crowned with our frowning battlements, or dared  
The desperate leap from tower to tower, nor fell  
Crushed, breathless, motionless ? Who e'er returned  
Alive ?—Oh horror ! horror ! Edith, fly !  
Speed me some tidings.

[*Exit EDITHA.*

He must die ; and I—  
I that so loved him, I that would have given  
My life a thousand fold to save him—I  
Shall be his murderess.

*Enter ERNEST.*

*Ernest.*           Nay, lady, nay,  
There's yet a hope.

*Cunigunda.*      Old man, art thou turned flatterer ?  
He'll perish.

*Ernest.*   I beheld the manèged steed  
Ascend the steep and narrow stair ; a steed  
Of Araby, light-limbed and fine, with eyes  
Of living fire half starting from his slim  
And veiny head ; a hot and mettled steed ;  
Yet trained to such obedience, that each motion  
Of the swift foot seemed guided by the will  
Of the bold rider, even as they had been  
One and incorporate.   If man may atchieve  
This perilous deed, the falcon knight alone—

J



*Cunigunda.* Ernest, thou shalt have lands enow to  
make

Thyself a belted knight ! Now blessings on thee  
That bring'st me hope !—But Edith, Gertrude, Otto,  
Why come they not ? I could have won to Prague  
And back, in half the time. Why come they not ?  
Good tidings find swift messengers. Alas !  
I fear ; I fear.

*Ernest.* Shall I go seek them ?

*Cunigunda.* No.

The abyss, the dread abyss, where the old wall  
Shelving, and steep, and crumbling, overhangs  
The vale of Hirschberg from such dizzying height  
As never plummet fathomed ;——that abyss—  
Henry of Cassel there, and the good knight  
Of Olmutz—Oh I have been cruel, Ernest,  
And for my sins he'll die ! to punish me  
He'll die ! he'll die !

*Enter GERTRUDE.*

*Gertrude.* Lady——

*Cunigunda.* Why dost thou pause?

*Ernest.* See how she pants! she's breathless.

*Cunigunda.* Is there any

Panting and breathless save myself? He's dead!

I see it in her face.

*Gertrude.* He hath safely passed

The abyss.

*Cunigunda.* Now thanks to Heaven! The dread  
abyss.

He's safe! he's safe! Thou shalt be portioned, Gertrude.

He's safe!

*Ernest.* Yet that wide leap from tower to tower  
Where Rudolf of Thuringia——

*Cunigunda.* Out on thee,  
Raven!

*Ernest.* That fearful leap, with scarce a ledge  
Where steed——

*(Shouts without.)*

*Cunigunda.* What means that cry ?

*Re-enter OTTO and EDITHA.*

Editha, Otto,

What means that cry ?

*Editha.* He's safe! The leap is past ;  
The falcon knight is safe !

*Ernest.* Look to her !

*Cunigunda.* Nay  
I'm well. Say o'er again !

*Editha.* The leap is past.  
The falcon knight is safe.

*Cunigunda.* My Editha,  
Ask what thou wilt of me. Was ever woman  
So blest before ! The falcon knight is mine,  
Mine own, and I am his. Oh, thanks to Heaven !  
Now, ye that called my vow cruel and rash,  
What say ye now ?

*Ernest.* Alas, dear lady, still  
I grieve for them that——

*Cunigunda.*                    Talk not of them. Think  
What were a thousand such as they, compared  
With the bold falcon knight !—Editha, Gertrude,  
Albert will come to claim his bride ; wipe off  
These blistering tears, braid this dishevelled hair,  
Adjust my wimple and my veil ;—my knight  
Will come to claim his bride.

*Enter SIR ALBERT and a PAGE.*

   He comes ! away !  
I was a fool to think of vanity ;  
He will not love his Cunigunda less  
That she hath lain on the stone floor in prayer  
And tearful agony, whilst he hath dared  
This perilous deed.—Albert !

*Albert (to a page.)*                    Lead Saladin  
Gently around the court. He trembles still  
At the o'ermastered danger.

*Cunigunda.*                    Albert !

*Albert (still to the page.)* Loosen

The foaming bit. It is a matchless steed.

*Cunigunda.* Oh matchless! matchless! I myself  
would be

His groom. But Albert!—

*Albert.* When he's cooler, bid

Thy comrade, Jerome, ride him back to Prague.

Bring thou another courser straight. The day

Wears on.

[*Exit PAGE.*]

*Cunigunda.* Sir Albert!

*Albert.* Madam!

*Cunigunda.* Hast thou not

A word for Cunigunda? Dost thou stand

There, like some breathing marble in thy cold

Stern haughty beauty, mute and motionless,

With arms close-folded and down-gazing eyes,

No thought for Cunigunda, not a word

For her whom thou hast won, not even a look?

Dost thou not claim me, Albert?

*Albert.* Lady, no;

I have a wife——ay, start and tremble ! turn  
As pale as winter snows ! feel every pang  
That thou hast caused and scorned !——I have a wife,  
A sweet and gracious woman ; beautiful  
Beyond all beauty, for the blush of love  
The smile of kindness, and the dancing light  
Of those joy-kindling eyes in whose bright play  
The innocent spirit revels, blend their spell  
With features delicate as lily bells,  
A shape more graceful than the clustering vine.  
Talk of thy stately charms ! At Ida's side  
Thou would'st shew coarse and sunburnt, as the brown  
And rugged elm beside the shining beech.——  
Ay, shrink and tremble ! hide thy burning cheeks  
Within thy quivering hands !——Wilt thou hear more ?——  
This lovely loving wife, my three years' bride  
And twice a mother,—Oh none ever bent  
With such a grace as she o'er sleeping babes,  
Nor ever youthful mother bent o'er babes  
So like the Cherubim !——This wife, so fair,

So sweet so womanly, whose pitying heart  
Would ache to see a sparrow die, this wife  
I love.

*Cunigunda.* Why then——Oh cruel !

*Albert.*

Dar'st thou talk

Of cruelty, proud murderess, whose meed  
For true-love hath been death ? Whose sinful vow  
Slew the most gracious boy of all the earth,  
The hope and pride and joy of his high line  
Young Rudolf of Thuringia, my dear brother,  
My dear and only brother ?

*Ernest.*

'Tis Duke Albert !

Yet pity her ! See how she smites her brow,  
And tears her raven hair !

*Albert.*

Where was her pity

When that fair boy—Murderess, 'tis Rudolf's brother  
That speaks to thee. When first I heard that tale,  
Several revenges, deadly, bloody, fierce,  
All that the body can endure of keen  
And lengthened agony, the rack, the wheel,

The stake rushed through my brain, but they had been  
A poor and trivial vengeance, all unmeet  
For such o'erwhelming wrong ; my cunning hate  
Hath found a more enduring curse. Thou lov'st me,  
Thou lov'st me, Cunigunda, with the hot  
Wild passion of thy nature, and I scorn thee !  
Thou art contemned and loathed by whom thou lov'st ;  
Won and abandoned ; spurned and thrown aside  
Like an infected garment. The plague spot  
Of sin is on thee, woman ; blackest shame  
Shall follow like thy shadow. 'Twas for this  
I donned the mask of courtship ; for this trained  
My faithful steed. Thy worthless hand is mine——  
Nay touch me not, hang not about my knees——  
Mine to bestow. Some horse-boy of my train  
Shall prove thy fitting partner.

*Editha.*

Oh for pity !

For manly pity, good my lord, break not  
The bruised flower !

*Cunigunda.*

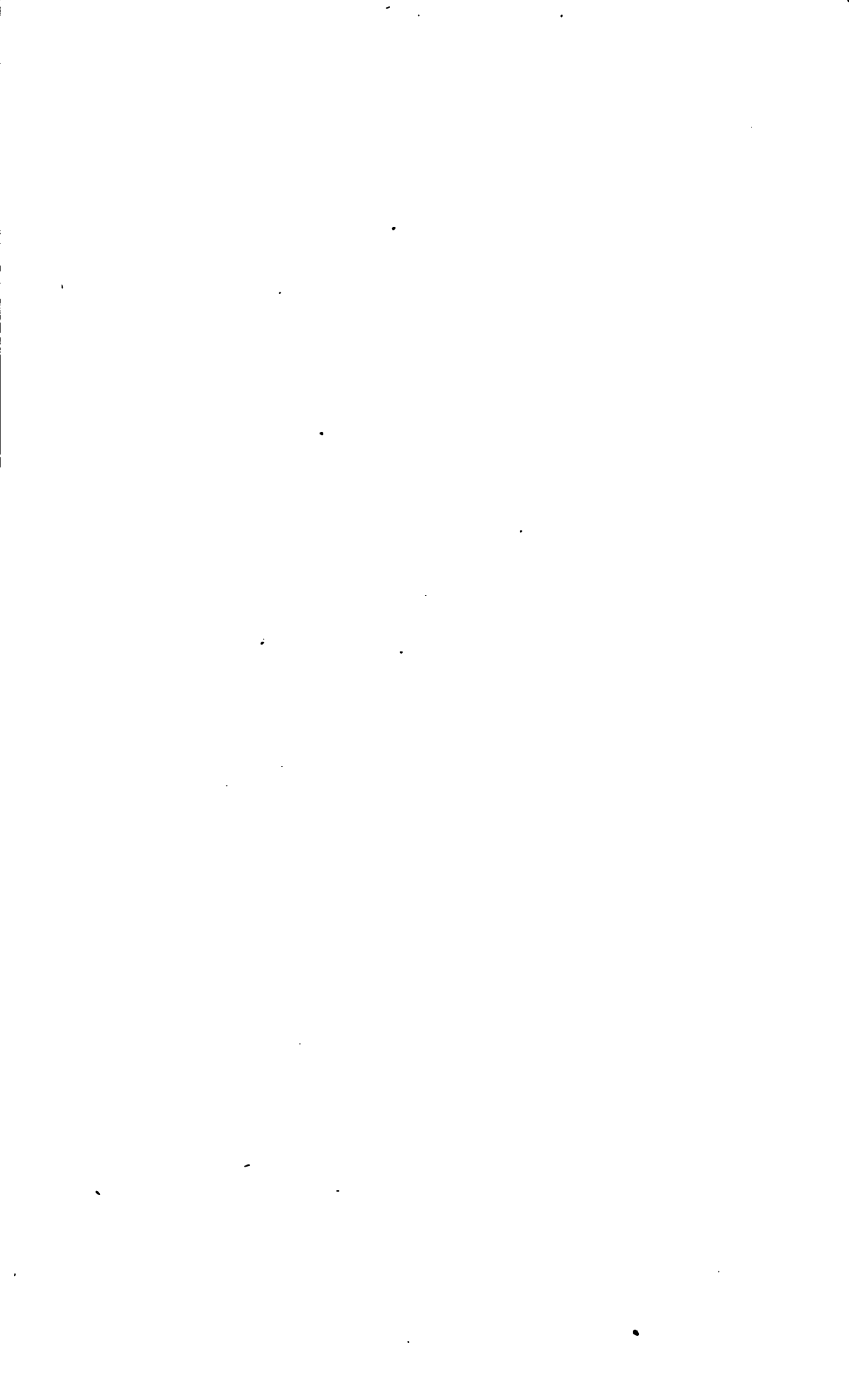
Be silent, Editha !



I have deserved all evil. Deal with me  
Even as thou wilt, Duke Albert. I've deserved  
Thy hate—but soon my heart—my bursting heart——  
Deal with me as thou wilt. 'Twill not be long!

*Albert.* Nay then—Rise, Cunigunda! Lift thy face  
From off the ground and listen. I'll not break  
The bruised flower. Live and repent. In prayer  
And pious penance live. The cloister cell  
Were thy meet refuge. By to-morrow's dawn  
Go join the Carmelites at Prague. For them  
Who died untimely, for thyself, for me  
And for my children, pray!——Now home, Sir Page!  
My steed! my steed!

[*Exeunt.*



# THE FAWN.

A DRAMATIC SCENE.



The story of this little Drama is taken, with some variation in the scene and catastrophe, from the beautiful ballad entitled *Fause Foodrage*, in the *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border*.

**CHARACTERS.**

**COUNTRESS LINDORF.**

**BERTHA.**

**LEOPOLD.**

**CONRADE.**

**FREDERICK.**

*SCENE, a Forest in Bohemia;—a Castle in the background.*

## THE FAWN.



LEOPOLD *alone.*

*Leopold.* Lie there, dark murderous weapon! I  
renounce thee!

Farewell, ye barbarous sports! Alas, poor fawn!

*Enter BERTHA.*

*Bertha.* Did I not hear a gun? The poor, poor fawn  
Licking its bleeding mother! This is cruel.

*Leopold.* Oh cruel! cowardly! Never again——  
I hate ~~my~~ treacherous skill; I hate myself.

*Bertha.* Look how the poor fawn with his nudging  
nose

And pretty stamping feet, dabbled in blood,

Tries to awake his dam! How piteously  
He moans, poor spotted thing! Art thou quite sure  
The doe is dead? I thought I saw her move.

*Leopold.* Too sure. 'Twas not her motion; that  
fond thing

Striving—I cannot bear to look on them!  
She is too surely dead; when I came up  
I found her dying; her fine delicate limbs  
Trembling with the death-shiver. She scarce breathed;  
But the pure instinct of maternal love  
Struggled to keep in life. She fixed her sad  
Affectionate eyes upon her young one's face,  
Then moaning over her as now he moans,  
Stretched out her feet, and died. Oh, lady Bertha,  
Man is the wilder brute!

*Bertha.* But thou art grieved  
And knew'st not—No, I'm sure thou ne'er didst dream  
Of this poor fawn?

*Leopold.* No; it lay sleeping there  
Behind the bushes. But a savage heart.

Was mine, that could even here—Look round thee, lady !  
There is not in the forest such a spot  
As this. Look how the wood-walks hither tend,  
As to a centre : some in vistas green,  
Pillared and overarched, as the long aisles  
Of an old proud cathedral ; others wandering  
In lovelier mazes through a various scene  
Holly or copse-wood ; scarce the eye can trace  
Their coy meanders, but all meeting here  
Beneath this monarch oak, through whose thick boughs  
The sun comes flickering. How the indented leaves  
Of brightest green cut clearly the blue sky  
And the small clouds ! And how this tiny spring  
Bubbles and sparkles round the moss-grown roots,  
Winding its silver thread along the short  
Elastic turf, so thickly set with flowers,  
And mixed with fragrant herbs, till it is lost  
Amongst the bowery thickets ! Not a spot  
In all the forest can compare with this,  
Nature's own temple ! And that delicate thing

Made up of innocence, and love, and fear,  
And trembling happiness, most beautiful  
Of all this beauty, she, who stood enjoying,  
With a sweet peaceful spirit, drinking in  
This flood of bliss,—that I—I hate myself!  
And thou must hate me, lady.

*Bertha.*

Oh ! no ; no ;

Thou art so sorry !

*Leopold.*

'Tis my father's fault :

He keeps me here, waging unequal war  
With these poor harmless deer, when I should be  
Armed in the desperate strife, stemming the tide  
Of glorious battle, winning death or fame.

*Bertha.* That were a strange place to learn gentleness!

*Leopold.* The only place for me. Oh, I must forth

• Into the stirring world ! I have wild dreams  
Which I would fain make real ; daring thoughts  
Which must be turned to action ; hopes which soar  
High as the eagle's wing ; all madness now——  
But——Lady Bertha, I have basked too long



In the bright blaze of beauty ; I have gazed  
Unseen, unknown as our poor forest cot  
Looks upward on thy castle. I must gain  
A name, or die. A glorious name !

*Bertha.*

Nay, Leopold——

*Leopold.* She knows me !

*Bertha.*

Leopold——

*Leopold.*

Oh now that name

Is precious to my heart ! Thou know'st me lady ?

*Bertha.* Think'st thou I thus had spoken with a  
stranger ?

I've often seen thee at our early mass,  
And sometimes from the ramparts ; and besides  
My own dear mother oft times talks of thine——  
Her faithful favourite maid.

*Leopold.*

She was her maid ;

Her favourite maid. Oh I had not forgotten.

*Bertha.* And of thy father, her kind faithful friend  
That old and reverend man, whose shining hairs,  
Whiter than ermine, so become his bright

And healthful cheek. How much I love to see him!  
How much I wish to know him! My dear mother  
Talks oftentimes of him. Aye, and of thee—  
Oftenest I think of all. Dost thou not know  
That I'm thy foster-sister? That one breast—  
Alas, that breast is cold!—nourished us both?  
And that we should be friends? Oh I have longed,  
Even in the holy chapel, to say this;  
But my stern uncle——

*Leopold.*                      Kindest, loveliest maid!  
How well that heart is mated to that face!  
And does the gentle Countess speak of me—  
That beautiful grief? Yes, I have often seen,  
Have often felt those dewy eyes where love  
Mixes with pity as in angel's looks,  
Fixed upon mine, as she would read my soul.  
Oh! she would find it full of deep respect  
For her—and for her daughter.

*Bertha.*                      Leopold,  
Look! the poor fawn hath moaned himself to sleep!

Give him to me, I, captive though I be,  
Or little better in those frowning walls,  
Yet have I there a lone deserted nook  
Which long neglect hath made a sort of garden ;  
All clothed with moss, and grass, and trailing plants  
And decked with gorgeous weeds. The wild vine there,  
And white veined ivy form a natural arbour ;  
And I have mingled odorous shrubs, and sprinkled  
Bright showers of garden blossoms. It is now  
A bower fit for the fairies ; and unclaimed  
Of any other I still call it mine ;  
And there my pretty fawn shall dwell with me  
And feed on roses ;—my poor dappled fawn !  
No ; not in thine arms. Give him into mine.

*Leopold.* Nay, let me carry him !

*Bertha.*

Oh ! no, no, no ;

I must not ; dare not.

*Leopold.*

Only to the gate.

*Bertha.* The gate ! Then I must tell my truant tale,  
Must own my wanderings. First put down the fawn.

I know not why—but, Leopold, I feel  
As if I had done wrong—as if—and yet  
I'm sure I meant no harm. Let us sit here  
On these soft mossy roots. It is, indeed,  
A chosen spot! Well, Leopold, thou know'st  
That my good father died ere I was born,  
A luckless girl! and that his castle, lands,  
Titles and vassals, to his brother fell,  
And I, amongst the rest, his infant ward.  
With my dear mother I have lived with him  
In a most strict seclusion—prisoners  
In every thing but name! For eighteen years,  
All my short life, we ne'er have passed the gate.

*Leopold.* Villain! base cowardly villain! Soon a  
time

Shall come——Go on sweet lady!

*Bertha.*

She still mourning

Her lord's untimely death; and I——

*Leopold.*

Oh villain

That drink'st the orphan's tears! A time shall come——

*Bertha.* Nay, peace ; I prythee, peace ; I still content—

Content is not enough !—I still as happy

As a young bird.

*Leopold.* Happy ! with that fierce tyrant,  
That stern oppressor !

*Bertha.* He was sometimes kind  
And my dear mother always. All the house  
Was good and kind to me—too good ! too kind !  
Oh ! there is in man's heart a fathomless well  
Of goodness ! I had nought but gratitude,  
And yet how kind they were ! Content and happy  
Was I ; yet sometimes an unbidden thought  
Sprang up—a hope—a wish—an earnest wish !  
A powerful passionate hope ! We had a maid  
Bred in the forest,—a young innocent girl,  
Who pined for trees, and air, and liberty,  
Even till she sickened, and her round red cheeks  
Grew thin and pale ; and books, dear books ! they all  
Of freedom spake and nature ; and the birds

**Leopold.**

**Refuse thee, lady ?**

**Bertha.**

**Yes.**

**Leopold.**

**But they, his vassals?**

**Surely one only man of all the world  
Could utter no to thee?**

**Bertha.**

**I asked them not.**

Have I not said that they were good and kind,—  
Kindest to me? And could I tempt them on  
To possible punishment.

**Leopold.**

**Punished for thee !**

Oh ! what a bliss !—But thou art here ?

*Bertha.*

I found

The lone deserted court I called my garden,  
And dressed my bower, and tried to trifle thus  
My bootless wish away :—But still it clung !  
And one day following, with my eye, my heart,  
A ring-dove hastening to her woodland nest,  
Wishing I too had wings, I marked how low  
In that dark angle was the ruined wall,  
Covered with clustering ivy and o'erhung  
By an old ash. And almost with the thought,  
The ivy boughs my ladder, and the ash  
My friendly veil, I climbed the wall and came  
Down on the other side, a safe descent,  
Propped by the uneven trunk ;—and there I stood  
Panting with fear and joy at liberty !  
Yet was I so o'ermastered by my fear,  
That for that day I could not move a step  
Into the forest ; but crept trembling back—  
And wept as if for grief. Often since then,  
When the Count Lindorf is abroad, as now

That he lies sick at Prague, I venture forth  
As fearless as a dove.

*Leopold.*                      And still unmarked ?

*Bertha.*    The sheltering forest reaches to the wall—  
Look, 'tis close by!—I never have seen trace  
Of man but once ; then thou wast reading here :  
I had resolved if ever I should meet  
Thee, or thy good old father, to accost ye :  
Yet when I saw thee here—I know not how—  
But my heart failed me, and I fled.    I wonder  
At to-day's courage ; but the poor, poor fawn—  
I only thought of him.    Well, I must hence ;  
My mother else may miss me.

*Leopold.*                      Then the Countess  
Knows not this path ?

*Bertha.*                      No ; her sweet gentle spirit  
Is cast in a too anxious mould ; she fears  
For all she loves.    No ; I have never told her.  
But now that we—and she must see my fawn !  
Aye—and she ought to know.



*Leopold.*

And when she knows—

Oh, lady, I shall never see thee more!

*Bertha.* Yet I must tell her—Surely I must tell her!

She is my own most dear and loving mother:—

Ought I not, Leopold?

*Leopold.*

Lady thou should'st ;

Though it will root from out my heart a hope

Deeper than life ; thou should'st.

*Bertha.*

Give me the fawn !

And, Leopold, stay here. I think—I hope

That she will wish to see thee. If she should——

Come not with me. Be sure to stay just here.

Farewell !—Nay, struggle not, my pretty fawn!

Thou must along with me.——Farewell!

[*Exit BERTHA.*

*Leopold.*

Farewell,

Loveliest and most beloved ! Well might she wish

To tread the woodland path,—light-footed maid !

How beautiful she is, with her white arms

Wound round her innocent burthen, and her head

Bent over his so lulling! Even he,  
That wild and timorous creature, feels the charm,  
And is no more afraid. She disappears ;—  
I scarce distinguish now her floating veil  
And her brown waving hair. How beautiful!  
How graceful! Most like one of Dian's nymphs  
But full of deeper tenderness. Her voice,  
Her words still linger round me like the air,  
The dewy sunny air of which she spake,  
Glowing and odorous. Oh! that I were—  
And I will be. Yes, loveliest, most beloved,  
I will deserve thee! I will make my name,  
My humble lowly name, worthy to join  
With thine, sweet Lady Bertha!—Hapless thing,  
Thy gay compeers may bound at peace for me;  
I shall seek braver fields. For thee, poor doe,  
I will go bury thee deep in yon dell.  
Should she return,—and will she then return?  
How my heart throbs to know.

*Enter* CONRADE.

*Conrade.* Surely I saw  
Some bright and lovely maiden flitting by  
Close to the castle wall. Along this path  
She must have come. Or was it but the vision  
That fills my dreams by night, my thoughts by day,  
The bright and lovely form ?—Ha, Leopold !  
Hast thou seen here a woman, a fair woman ?

**Leopold.** She has just parted hence, the Lady Bertha.

**Conrade.** Bertha! Oh I must see, must follow her!

*Leopold.* Nay, 'tis too late. Ere now she's in the  
Castle.

**She will return.**

*Conrade.* Oh, wondrous, wondrous chance!  
The Lady Bertha!—Did she speak to thee?  
What seems she, Leopold? Gay, gentle, kind,  
Her mother was. Oh, tell me of her, boy!

**Leopold.** Father, I must to the wars.

**Conrade.** Tell me of *her*!

*Leopold.* I must go win a name.

*Conrade.* Well ! Well ! thou shalt.

Talk to me now of Bertha !

*Leopold.* This is Bertha !

Why war and fame and life they are all Bertha !

Nothing but Bertha !—Oh, I love her, father,

Madly and wildly. She is my whole world,

Rip up my heart and you will find all Bertha ;

And I will wed her. I must to the wars

And earn her love. Nay, shake not thus thy head.

Though she be great and I be lowly, father,

I tell thee I will make a glorious name,

Or die.

*Conrade.* This is most wondrous. But the Count—  
Count Lindorf ?

*Leopold.* Oh ! true love is strong and mighty ;  
Pride bends before it.

*Conrade.* Were it pride alone !  
Count Lindorf, as I hear, would rather see  
The Lady Bertha in a convent cell

Than wedded. He is dark and dangerous,  
And full of fears. Men say—

*Leopold.* Speak on, speak on.

What say they, father?

*Conrade.* Dark and dangerous  
A fierce and gloomy—Nay, no more of this.  
Whither dost drag that doe?

*Leopold.* To bury it  
Far from her sight; she will be here anon.  
She fain would know thee, and she speaks of thee  
So reverently! In truth she is as humble  
As a poor village maiden; yet as gracious  
As a born princess. I shall soon return.  
Stay, dearest father, lest she come the while;  
She fain would see thee.

[*Exit LEOPOLD.*]

*Conrade.* Oh if she could know,  
Could feel, could share—Be still, my beating heart!  
Thou shalt not master me, be still!—She comes,  
The beautiful! the kind!—Oh, that I dared—

*Enter* COUNTESS LINDORF and BERTHA.

*Bertha.* This is the spot I'm sure; but where is he?

*Conrade.* These are the first words I have heard her  
speak

In all my life! How mine ear drinks her voice!

The Countess too!

*Countess.* Conrade, my kindest friend!

My faithfullest! my best! How many cares

Have made me old since in thy parting tears

I said Farewell to truth and honesty!

*Conrade.* My gracious lady!

*Countess.* Conrade, where is he?

*Conrade.* In yonder dell. She hath caught sight  
of him.

*Bertha.* Ah, there he is burying the poor, poor doe!  
I must go help him.

*Countess.* First come hither, Bertha.

This is my faithful friend—

*Bertha.* Leopold's father,

I know him well. He is no stranger, mother;

Why I have loved him ever since I saw  
Those reverend hairs ; and he I'm sure loves me.  
Dost thou not, Conrade ? See, he looks at me  
With such a kindly gaze.

*Conrade.*                      How beautiful  
She is ! What a bright smile lives in her eyes !  
And see ! her soft white hand is dimpled o'er  
Like a young babe's. Oh, take it not away,  
That soft and dimpled hand !

*Countess.*                      No, rather give  
Both hands, my Bertha. He's thy foster father.

*Bertha.* May I not call him father ? I, alas !  
Have never known one.

*Conrade.*                      Blessings on thy head,  
Beloved child !

*Countess.*                      Now, my own Bertha, go  
And seek young Leopold, and bring him hither.  
Nay, let her go !—

[Exit BERTHA.]

Yes, Conrade, she is more

Than thy heart paints her : through these long, long years  
My only comfort. She is all made up  
Of sweet serene content ; a buoyant spirit  
That is its own pure happiness. If e'er  
Count Lindorf chide her—and, in sooth, even he  
Can scarcely find a fault to blame in Bertha—  
But should he chide her, she will meekly bend  
For one short moment, then rise smiling up,  
As the elastic moss when trampled on  
By some rude peasant's foot. Never was heart  
Stronger than her's in peaceful innocence.  
Now speak of him.

*Conrade.* First, Madam, he loves her.  
I knew it but to-day.

*Countess.* So ! She loves him,  
And knows it not. But tell me of his temper.

*Conrade.* Kind, noble, generous, but all too hot :  
Just like those bright black eyes, whose fiery flash  
Kindling with living light, I've seen thee watch  
With such a painful joy.



*Countess.* I have gazed on him  
Till my eyes ached, till every sense was dazzled.  
Yet with that fire there was a gentleness,  
A softer, tenderer look. And still he knows not—

*Conrade.* I dare not trust him, lady. He already  
Abhors Count Lindorf; he already longs  
For war, for danger, for renown, for aught  
That at the risk of life or limb may win  
A name, a noble name.

*Countess.* A noble name !  
He pants for that ! And I, that with a word—  
Oh, may I ? dare I ?

*Conrade.* Noble lady, no.  
The Count is dangerous, and this rash youth—

*Countess.* True ; true. And I expect my powerful  
kinsman

The Baron Zutphen ; he shall hear my story,  
My sad, sad story, Conrade. Oh, the strife  
Of love so long pent in, so strong, so deep,  
So gushing through the heart with bitter fear !

And I that ne'er have known the dear delight  
To give him pleasure—Oh, to think that I  
Could with a word, one word—I must away;  
I dare not trust myself. Good Conrade help me  
Back to the Castle.

*Conrade.* Rest thee here awhile,  
Dear lady!—How she trembles!—Nay, sit down:  
Command thyself.

*Re-enter LEOPOLD and BERTHA.*

*Bertha.* Mother!

*Countess.* Who called me mother?

*Leopold.* Let me support her. Lady, lean on me.

*Countess.* His very tone!

*Bertha.* How art thou, dearest mother?

*Countess.* Better.

*Bertha.* But still thou tremblest, and so pale!

*Leopold.* Oh, do not rise. Thou art too weak!

*Countess.* A strong

And a kind arm supports me.

*Leopold.* Never, Madam,  
Was it so honoured. Would that all my life  
Might pass as this brief moment !

*Countess.* Leopold  
I think.

*Leopold.* And for my father's sake, perhaps—

*Countess.* Thy father ! Aye indeed thy father ! Leopold,

I have a boon to ask of thee.

*Leopold.* A boon !  
Say, Madam, a command.

*Countess.* Well ! a command.  
Conrade hath told me thou wilt to the wars ;  
I have a powerful kinsman, young and brave,  
High in the Emperor's favour ; I expect him  
At Lindorf in the autumn. Be content  
To wait his coming, and my first request  
Shall be that he will guide thee in that path  
Of stainless honour which himself hath trod.  
Say, wilt thou wait till then ?



Every where vainly. I have that to tell  
Which may not brook delay.

*Countess.* Is the Count Lindorf  
Returned ?

*Frederick.* My gracious lady, he is dead.

*Conrade.* Dead !

*Frederick.* Even so. Last night Count Lindorf  
died.

*Countess.* No, no, he lives ! the real Count Lindorf lives !  
My son ! my son ! my own, my very son !  
Thou for whose sake I have endured to live  
In prison and in sorrow—thou art mine,  
My Leopold ! In the face of all the world  
I will proclaim thee rightful Count of Lindorf.

*Leopold.* Mother ! I do not ask if this be real,  
My heart hath always claimed thee. Yes ; I am  
Thy son, thy very son.

*Bertha.* And the poor Bertha—  
What then is she ?

*Countess.* My daughter, still my daughter.

*Leopold.* Bertha my sister ?

*Countess.* No ; thy wife. Will that  
Please thee as well ? And our dear Conrade's child.

*Conrade.* My own sweet child !

*Countess.* My son, thy speaking eyes  
Demand my story. Briefly let me tell  
A grief which eighteen years have left as fresh  
As yesterday. Thy father was a man  
Born to lead all hearts captive. Such he was  
As thou art now. Look at the features, Frederick—  
The shape, the air.

*Frederick.* It is his very self.

*Countess.* I loved him—we were in our bridal year—  
Oh how I loved him ! So did all the world  
Except his envious brother. They went forth  
Together, at the break of day, to hunt  
Here in this very forest ; and at eve  
One—only one—returned. Mine—mine—O God !  
The agony, the frightful agony  
When he at last was brought—O God !

*Leopold.*

My mother!

*Countess.* Some tale was told of direful accident—  
Would that I could believe! But from that hour  
Peace, rest, and appetite and natural smiles  
Forsook the conscious fratricide—Oh guilt  
Hath well avenged us! But, ere yet the flush  
Of bold triumphant crime had paled to fear,  
And dark remorse, did Conrade overhear—  
For I was great of thee, my Leopold,  
And grief and horror had brought on my pains,—  
This Lindorf bribe a ruffian to secure  
My infant, if a male. Thou, sweetest Bertha,  
A new-born innocent babe wast in the castle;  
And he, and my kind nurse, and she the kindest  
And faithfullest of all, thy blessed mother,  
Contrived, I scarcely conscious, to exchange  
My boy for his fair girl.—A boundless debt  
We owe thee, Conrade.

*Conrade.*

Pay it to my Bertha.

*Leopold.* She is herself that debt! What was the life

Of fifty such as I, compared to Bertha ?

A paltry boon, scarce worth my thanks, dear father !

She is the treasure ! She —

*Bertha.*

Cease, flatterer, cease !

I must go tend my fawn.

*Countess.*

My son, I long

To see thee in thy castle.

*Frederick.*

Ye will find

The Baron Zutphen there to greet ye, Madam.

He came to proffer succour and protection

To thee and Lady Bertha ; he will now

Welcome his brave young kinsman. Not a heart,

Vassal or servant but will feel the joy

Of this discovery.

*Countess.*

Leopold, my son—

How proud I am of that unwonted word !

Let us go meet the Baron. Bertha, Conrade,

Daughter and friend, come with me ; this kind cousin

Must see how rich I am ! Mine own dear son !



# THE WEDDING RING.

A DRAMATIC SCENE.



The old ballad of The Berkshire Lady, which recounts an adventure that actually happened above a century ago to one of the most respectable families in that county, is the origin of the following drama. The names and localities that I have chosen are of course fictitious.

## CHARACTERS.

SIR EDWARD DELMONT.

ARTHUR DELMONT, *his brother.*

*The* LADY STANLEY.

*Scene, a magnificent Saloon in the house of the Lady  
Stanley near Reading.*

## THE WEDDING RING.

---

SIR EDWARD DELMONT, *and* ARTHUR.

*Sir Edward.* Why thus amont, fair brother? 'Tis

a rich

And princely hall, a palace-like demesne.

Seest thou yon stately oaks and those old thorns,

The growth of centuries, mingling their gay wreaths

Of pearly blossoms with the weeping spray

Of the light feathery birch, and darker shoots

Of shining holly, while amidst the fern

The dappled deer lie couching? Art thou master

Of this fair seat?

*Arthur.* I'faith I know not.

*Sir Edward.* 'Twas

A gay and glittering coach, drawn by four mares

Of the right Flanders breed, conveyed us hither ;  
And she our fair companion mistress seemed  
Of that proud equipage—the nameless she !

*Arthur.* Not wholly nameless,—Mary ;—the good  
priest

Told us so far.

*Sir Edward.* And in so telling told  
Full little. Mary ! commonest of sounds.  
Name of all wear ! So doth the lordly Earl,  
So the poor cobbler call his wife ; the princess  
Within her stately bower, and the coarse drudge  
That milks her kine, both answer to that name.  
'Tis general as the violet, now lurking  
Beneath the white-thorn hedge, now proudly placed  
I' the garden's southern nook beside the rose.  
She's Mary Delmont now. Dost shrink to hear  
Those words conjoined ?

*Arthur.* Not I.

*Sir Edward.* Yet thou art sad  
And silent, brother mine ; thy cheek is pale,

Thy fiery glance is quenched, and thy smooth brow  
Contracted into lines of wrinkling care  
Fitter for me thine elder; though I grant ye  
The chances of this morning might perplex  
Even my ripe wisdom. Wilt thou hear them? First  
To abide a challenge at the rapier point,  
The cause and challenge unknown; and then  
Having with some small pain—for true men love not  
To fight with shadows and for shadows!—having  
Roused thy hot valour to that Quixote strain,  
To find thy puissant adversary changed  
To a fair damsel, who doth give thee choice  
'Twixt two sharp hazards, wedlock or the sword;  
To marry in a mask, thou know'st not whom;  
To come home with thy bride thou know'st not where;  
And when safe lodged within this goodly chamber  
The bride to disappear thou know'st not how;  
Whilst at short intervals come grinning knaves,  
On thriftless errands bent, to trim the hearth  
Or close the casement, and young tittering girls

Thrust giggling faces through half open doors,  
 And if we ask who brought us here? or where  
 We be, unlucky?—groom and maid burst forth  
 Into ungoverned laughter and so vanish.

Say I not sooth?

*Arthur.* 'Tis over true.

*Sir Edward.* And draws not  
 The day towards noon, whilst we have been astir  
 Since dawn, nor broke our fasts?

*Arthur.* Thrice happy thou  
 Whom such a grief can trouble!

*Sir Edward.* Nay, good brother  
 Thou know'st the proverb says that a full sorrow——  
 But trust me Arthur 'tis for thee I grieve:  
 I doubt the lady much.

*Arthur.* Yet this fair seat——

*Sir Edward.* Didst ever see that sport of Fletcher's  
 muse

The comic scene where Leon tames the pride  
 Of Margarita?

*Arthur.* Yes; yes; yes.

*Sir Edward.* And dost not

Remember how a cunning quean, in the absence  
Of her rich mistress, cozened a gay gallant  
To wed her ?

*Arthur.* Yes; yes; yes.

*Sir Edward.* And brought him home

Even to her lady's dwelling ?

*Arthur.* Yes I tell thee.

Beshrew thee, Edward, that hast put in words  
The very thought that woke within my heart  
Such torture ! To have wedded poverty,  
Plain honest houseless poverty, were nothing,  
Poor though I be, were nothing ! But a cheat,  
A stale and common cheat ! perchance a lewd—  
It cannot be, it shall not.

*Sir Edward.* I would fain

Prove an ill guesser. But what ground of faith  
Hast thou ? Thou hast not seen her face, scarce e'en  
Her bearing,—so the veil and mantle shrouded

A form of towering height ; thou hast not heard  
Her voice, for surely, nay she owned as much,  
Her very tone was feigned. Thou may'st have wedded  
Old age and ugliness.

*Arthur.*                      She's young and fair ;

Of that be sure. Didst thou not see the white  
Smooth dimpled hand, the taper fingers jewelled  
Even to the joint, the slender wrist with veins  
Meandering through its snow ? Never such hand  
Pertained to aught save one as finely formed  
As delicately reared. It trembled too,  
That soft hand trembled and grew cold in mine  
With fearful modesty, then warmed again  
With love, quick fluttering love. Aye and athwart  
Her very wildest speech, although the words  
Were daring, and the purport rash and strange,  
Yet was the manner soft and maidenly,  
As of one born and nurtured in a pure  
And gentle dignity, that dared the rather,  
Because in her bold innocence she guessed not



The censure she provoked. I'll trust her still,  
In all her mystery.

*Sir Edward.* Heaven send her true!  
How wilt thou know her?

*Arthur.* By the very sign  
We spake of; the fair hand.

*Sir Edward.* The hand! Why, Arthur,  
Grant that the hand, so white and violet veined,  
The small pink palm and taper fingers pass  
For marks of beauty and of gentle blood;  
Yet many a gentle dame hath one as fair  
As——

*Arthur.* Pshaw, man! Pshaw! The ring! The  
ring! Thou know'st  
How unprepared we came for spousal rites,  
But I by chance wore on my hand the gem,  
Sir Rowland's legacy, his famous Psyche,  
And in default of the plain golden round  
I slid the storied onyx on her finger;—  
Hark!

*(One of the doors of the saloon is thrown open.)*

Sure I heard light footsteps. Hark! Oh grant  
It may be she, unmasked, unveiled, disclosed  
In mind and person. Yet have I a fear  
Of this strange meeting mingled with my hope.  
Do thou accost her first.

*(Arthur retires to the window—Sir Edward remains in  
the middle of the apartment.)*

*Sir Edward.*                      None enters.

*Arthur.*                                      What!

Another mockery?

*Sir Edward.*    No. I see her now,  
Beyond the gothic portal, in the hall,  
A noble lady, speaking with an air  
Of mild command to her mute menial train.  
Look! Thou may'st see her. Look!

*Arthur.*                                      I dare not. Is't  
The lady? Mine? Speak! Speak!

*Sir Edward.*                              I know not, Arthur,  
In truth I know not. Yet it cannot be.

She, whom we saw, could never have concealed  
That queenly shape, that goddess port.

*Arthur.*

Methought

She too was graceful.

*Sir Edward.*

Why this is a Grace,

Or rather a young Juno. Even a goddess

Wanting the state imperial would lack somewhat

Of her calm majesty. How those dark curls,

Falling in their rich clusters evenly

Adown those damask cheeks and that slim throat

Of ivory, add to the placid grandeur

Of her fair face. Yet those large modest eyes

Have a quick brightness in them ; a gay dimple

Plays round that finely chiselled mouth,—she's scarce

So awful as she seems.

*Arthur.*

How is she robed ?

Like her——

*Sir Edward.* No! she was quaintly garmented

In weeds of grey and pink,—a shrouding mantle,

A black disfiguring mask, a floating veil :

**Arthur.** The garb  
Is bride-like.

*Sir Edward.* It but seems the meet array,  
The every day attire of that young beauty.

*Sir Edward.* Is gloved. Sure I have seen that face!

Was't in a picture ? or a dream ? No ! no !  
I've seen her living self. 'Tis the rich heiress,  
The Lady Stanley. Dost thou not remember  
The good Lord Stanley, Arthur ? the old friend  
Of our dear father ? Many a time and oft  
Hast thou sate on his knee, a rosy-boy,  
Whilst he hath talked to thee of his fair girl,

His pretty black-eyed maid, and laughed to hear  
How thou wouldst vow when grown into a man  
That she—We were at Florence when he died ;  
But two years since I saw, and scarcely saw,  
At court the blooming heiress. 'Tis herself !  
She comes. Stand not aloof, like village churl  
From that rare beauty, Arthur.

*Enter the LADY STANLEY.*

Lady !

*Lady.*

Sirs,

I crave your pardon, if, as I have heard,  
Ye have waited long untended. The bright sun  
Tempted me forth amongst the flowers.

*Sir Edward.*

Thyself

A brighter, sweeter flower !

*Lady.*

Beseech ye, Sir,

Waiving all compliment to tell at once  
Your errand hither. I should grieve to fail  
In courtesy to men of gentle seeming ;

But being here a maiden and alone,  
Rich therefore envied, young therefore exposed  
To evil thoughts and evil tongues, it suits not  
My state to harbour gallants such as ye  
Within my house, unless indeed the occasion  
May justify the visit. Seek ye ought  
Of me or mine ?

*Sir Edward.* Fair Madam, for myself  
I well may answer, No. My brother yonder  
Seeks, what full many a man hath vainly sought  
Of the young Lady Stanley,—

*Lady.* Wherefore pause ?  
What seeks the gentleman ?

*Sir Edward.* A wife, fair Madam !  
A wife !

*Lady.* What mean ye, Sirs ?

*Arthur.* Not to offend  
Such beauty. Gentle lady, 'tis a tale,  
So wild, so strange, so marvellously true,  
I almost shame to tell it.

*Sir Edward.*                      Shall I spare

Thy blushes, Arthur?

*Lady.*                      Nay, methinks the hero

Will prove the best narrator.

*Sir Edward (aside).*      Say'st thou so?

*Lady.*    Pray ye, be seated, Sirs.    Now to thy tale.

*Arthur.* Much may befall in few short hours. Last night

Whilst sojourning at Reading, thither called

With this my kindest brother to attend

A kinsman's bridal, and still lingering on

In that gay pleasant town, a thriftless truant

From law, dull law, and law's thrice dull abode

The silent Temple—Yesternight, returning

Merrily to our Inn, a tiny page

Slid in my hand a scroll and disappeared

Ere we could ask, Whence com'st thou? 'Twas a cartel.

*Lady.*    Alas!

*Arthur.*                      A challenge from some unknown foe

To meet him, hand to hand, and sword to sword,

At peep of day upon the Forbury Hill.

*Lady.* Alas! Alas! How wild is man! Unknown  
too!

Didst thou attend his summons?

*Arthur.* Of a surety.

*Lady.* And he—?

*Sir Edward.* Aye now the marvel comes. Fair  
Madam,

No He was there.

*Arthur.* On that small eminence  
We met the dawn, and saw the morning mists  
Rise from the valley of the Thames, disclosing  
The dewy meadows, and the antique bridge,  
And Caversham's white hills,—but foe saw none.

*Lady.* Perchance he had repented his rash challenge.

*Sir Edward.* Nay, lady, list the tale.

*Arthur.* Foe saw we none  
Save a masked damsel pacing silently  
Beneath the venerable trees, which wave  
Their verdant plumage o'er the hill's steep brow.

*Lady.* A damsel! and was she the foe?



*Sir Edward.*

Good sooth

She's like to prove so.

*Lady.*

Sir!—Methinks thy brother

Can tell his tale without thine aid.—The Damsel?

*Arthur.* Paced to and fro, fair Madam. Once or  
twice

Drew near, then back again, as awe or shame

Strove with some desperate purpose.

*Lady.*

Did she speak?

*Arthur.* At last with, as it seemed to me, a forced  
And acted bravery, she drew a rapier  
Forth from beneath her cloak, avowed herself  
The challenger of yesternight, and then  
In few, brief, hurried words gave me the choice  
To fight her or to wed.

*Lady.*

Well, Sir!

*Sir Edward.*

Well, Madam!

In faith thou must accept my story, Lady,

Or else get none; he's silent from mere shame.

But canst thou—for all women have a gift

Of divination in man's weakness,—canst thou  
Look in his face, nor read at the first glance  
His answer ? “ Benedick the married man ”  
Is stamped on every feature. Ah ! fool ! fool !

*Arthur.* Edward, beware lest this blunt mood of  
thine

Carry thee past my patience.

*Sir Edward.* Art thou not

A fool ? And am not I a triple fool

To grieve o'er thy rank folly ?

*Lady.* But thy tale !

He wedded then with this unknown ?

*Sir Edward.* Despite

All counsel and all warning. Close at hand,  
Stood Church and Priest and Clerk in due array  
For his undoing. They were wedded, Lady,  
In shorter space than I have known the gallant  
Waste on the fashion of his doublet. Marry !  
This garment is for life.

*Lady.* And she still masked ?

*Sir Edward.* Masked, nameless and unknown. At  
the Church porch

Waited a gilded coach, which brought us straight  
To this fair hall ; and the she Will-o'-the-wisp,  
The female Jack-o-lantern, having lodged us  
Safe in her cage, vanished through yonder door.

*Lady.* 'Tis a strange tale.

*Sir Edward.* A tale would make the fortune  
Of a score of ballad-mongers, an 'twere but a thought  
More credible. But, Madam, canst thou give  
No help in this wild strait, no clue to trace  
The run-away ? Hast thou no damsel errante,  
No jill flirt in thy train were like to play  
The bride in this adventure ? No pert quean  
Of a waiting-woman, or wild wanton cousin  
To cozen our young gallant ?

*Lady.* Out upon thee !

Thou art uncivil.

*Sir Edward.* Of a younger brother  
He's none so poor ; and I, being, as thou seest,

A bluff, unnurtured bachelor, foredoomed  
To break my neck in a fox chase, he may reckon  
On my succession. Many a prim she-cousin,  
The accustomed garnish of your noble tables,  
That combs my lady's lap-dog, gathers scandal  
For her diversion, is a skilful loser  
At every game, a frontless flatterer  
At every season, many such a pest,  
However gently born, had dared this venture  
For freedom and a husband.

**Lady.** Once again

**Thou art uncivil, Sir. Thank heaven my kindred  
Are of a nobler temper.**

**Sir Edward.** My suspicions

- Point to the waiting-damsel. Your poor kinswoman  
Hath commonly a mincing delicate mien,  
Compound of fear and pride. Hast thou no wild  
Intriguess in thy train, whom love of gold—

**Lady.** Thou deemest that it must be love of gold?

**Sir Edward.** Madam, I do.

*Lady.*

And thou ?

*Arthur.*

I hope not so,

And as I hope, believe. Woman is generous,  
Not mercenary.

*Sir Edward.* Man is vain. I hold that  
'The truer axiom.

*Lady.* What did she resemble,  
This truant bride ?

*Sir Edward.* A strapping quean ; as tall  
As the great may-pole on the green ; as awkward  
As ever danced the may-day round ; as pert—

*Arthur.* Hold ! hold, good brother. She was of a  
height

Noble, sweet lady, as thine own ; as graceful  
Almost as thy fine form ; and for her speech  
'Twas frankness mixed with modesty. I trust  
To find a virtuous wife.

*Lady.* A fair one too ?

*Arthur.* So please you, gracious Madam. Not per-  
chance

What might seem fair by thee ;—full many a flower  
Shews like a weed beside the rose.

*Lady.*

## And rich ?

**Think'st thou to find her rich ?**

**Arthur.**

**For that I care not**

**Howbeit she prove not mercenary.**

**Sir Edward.**

**Tush !**

If she be poor, how can she quit herself  
Of that suspicion?—Madam, once again,  
Canst thou end our wild quest?

***Lady.***

**How should I! Masked—**

And nameless!—Ye yourselves might meet this bride  
And pass her by unknown.

*Sir Edward.*

**We have one token—**

*Arthur.* A white and peerless hand.

**Sir Edward.**

**A peerless ring !**

The hand was coarse and sunburnt, housewifely  
And toil-stained,—but the ring! an antique cameo,  
A Psyche, a quaint butterfly, whose wings  
Rather of gauze than stone seemed springing up

In act to fly, a piece of matchless art  
Found mid the ruins of old Rome, and rated  
Far above diamonds—To think that gem  
Should deck some stale cheat's finger !

*Lady (taking off her glove).*      Was the ring  
Like this upon my hand ?

*Arthur.*      My bride ! my wife !  
Art thou indeed my wife ?

*Lady.*      In very sooth  
No less.

*Arthur.* Sweet ring, I worship thee. My wife !  
My beautiful ! my true !

*Lady (to Sir Edward).* Now, heretic,  
Was the masked bride a cheat ?

*Sir Edward.*      Fair Lady Stanley,  
I cry you mercy !

*Lady.*      Nay thou 'scapst not so—  
Was she a cheat ?      •

*Sir Edward.* My pretty sister, yes.  
Not when she wore a mask on her bright face,

But when she doffed that mask, and strove to play  
The stranger!—simpleton! as if each blush,  
And downcast look, and sighing smile, and low  
And faltering accent told not plain as words  
Her secret.——Sister, were that lord of thine  
Less than a miracle of modesty,  
He must have known his bride. At the first glance  
I saw the trick, and instantly resolved  
To tease the teaser.

*Lady.* 'Twas a strange and bold  
And venturous hazard;—but I long had heard  
All good of Arthur Delmont: as a child  
From my dear father; as a youth from friends  
And kinsmen; and when I at last had seen,  
Had loved, and knew not——'Twas unwomanly,  
Unmeet; but ye shall see the wife redeem  
The errors of the maid.

*Arthur.* O may I merit  
Thy noble trust.

*Sir Edward.* It was a generous sin



And well may find forgiveness. Gentle madam,  
I have a heavier charge. Here in thy house,  
And on thy wedding-day—pray Heaven thou use not  
To starve thy guests!—I, thy new husband's brother,  
Am famished.

*Arthur.* Cannibal!

*Lady.* I cry you mercy!

But dinner——

*Sir Edward.* Breakfast, Lady Stanley! Breakfast!  
I've tasted nought to-day. Lets in to breakfast  
And talk at ease of this strange chance. Thy hand  
Fair sister,—aye the ring becomes it well,—  
The antique wedding ring, an emblem fit  
Of happiness and love.—To breakfast, quick!

[*Exeunt.*



# **EMILY.**

**A DRAMATIC SCENE.**

## CHARACTERS.

LORD GLENTHAM.

AMELIA, *his daughter.*

MAURICE, *Amelia's husband.*

WILLIAM, *a boy of six years old, the son of Maurice  
and Amelia.*

SCENE, *the inside of a cottage.*

## EMILY.

---

*Amelia, at work, singing ; Maurice enters during her song.*

### SONG.

The sun is careering in glory and might  
'Mid the deep blue sky and the cloudlets white ;  
The bright wave is tossing its foam on high,  
And the summer breezes go lightly by ;  
The air and the water dance, glitter and play——  
And why should not I be as merry as they ?

The linnet is singing the wild wood through ;  
The fawn's bounding footstep skims over the dew ;

The butterfly flits round the flowering tree ;  
And the cowslip and blue-bell are bent by the bee.  
All the creatures that dwell in the forest are gay—  
And why should not I be as merry as they \* ?

*Amelia.* Ah ! art thou there ? I thought I was  
alone.

Hast thou been long returned ?

*Maurice.* Even now.

*Amelia.* I'm glad ;

For I would feel thy presence,—as I used  
When I, a conscious girl, if thou didst come  
Behind my chair, knew thee without the aid  
Of eye or ear. A wife's love is as strong,  
Her sense should be as quick.

*Maurice.* But maiden love  
Is mixed with shame, and doubt, and consciousness,

\* This song has been very beautifully set to music by my young friend, Mr. Charles Packer, one of the most distinguished and promising pupils of the Royal Musical Academy.

Which have a thousand eyes, a thousand ears.

Amelia, thou art pale. Nay, if thou smilest

Thou wilt be pale no longer : thy rich smile

Is fitly wedded to a varying blush,

That flutters tremulously in thy fair cheek,

Like shivering wings of new-caught butterflies.

Ah, there it is !

*Amelia.* Flatterer !

*Maurice.* But thou wast pale

Stooping so long o'er that embroidery,

That irksome toil. Go forth into the air.

*Amelia.* Not yet ; there still is light enough to work ;

I have one flower to finish. Then I'll fly

To the sweet joys of busy idleness,

To our sweet garden. I am wanted there—

So William says ; the freshening showers to-day

Have scattered my carnations ; I must raise

Their clear and odorous beauties from the dark

Defiling earth.

*Maurice.* That task is done.

*Amelia.*

By thee ?

After thy hard day's toil ? Oh what a fond  
And foolish lover-husband I have got !  
Art thou not weary ?

*Maurice.*

Only just enough

To feel the comfort, sweetest, of repose ;  
Of such repose as this, here at thy feet  
Extended, and my head against thy knee.

*Amelia.* Even as that sweet and melancholy prince,

Hamlet the Dane, lay at Ophelia's feet  
His lady-love. Wast thou not thinking so ?

*Maurice.* I was.

*Amelia.* And I was likening thee to one—

Dost thou remember—'tis the prettiest moment  
Of that most marvellous and truest book—  
When her so dear Sir Charles at Harriet's feet  
Lay turning up his bright face smilingly \*.  
Dost thou remember ?

*Maurice.*

Banterer ! Where is William ?

\* Sir Charles Grandison, vol. vi.



*Amelia.* That is a secret. Do not question me,  
Or I shall tell. He will be shortly back.

(*Sings.*)

The linnet is singing the wild wood through,  
The fawn's bounding footstep skims over the dew;  
The butterfly flits round the flowering tree;  
And the cowslip and blue-bell are bent by the bee.  
All the creatures that dwell in the forest are gay—  
And why should not I be as merry as they?  
And why should not I be as merry as they?

*Maurice.* How much thou lov'st that song!

*Amelia.* He loves it so,

Our William : if far off within the wood  
He do but catch one clear and ringing note  
Of that wild cheerful strain, he scuds along  
With his small pretty feet, like the young brood  
Of the hen-partridge to her evening call.

*Maurice.* Well but where is he?

*Amelia.*

Guess.

*Maurice.*

Nay, tell me, love.

*Amelia.* To-day at noon, returning from the farm,  
Where on some trifling errand I had sent him,  
He left the path in chase of that bright insect  
The burnished dragon-fly, with net-work wings  
So beautiful. His shining guide flew on,  
Tracing the channel of the rippling spring  
Up to its very source. There William lost him :  
But looking round upon that fairy scene  
Of tangled wood and babbling waters clear,  
He found a fairy carpet ; strawberries  
Spread all about, in a rich tapestry  
Of leaves and blushing fruit : and he is gone,  
With his own basket that his father made him,  
His own dear father, to bring home his prize  
To that dear father.

*Maurice.* Prythee, love, say on ;

This is a tale which I could listen to  
The livelong day.

*Amelia.*           And will it not be sweet  
To see that lovely boy, blushing all over,  
His fair brow reddening, and his smiling eyes  
Filling with tears, his scarlet lips far ruddier  
Than the red berries, stammering and forgetting  
The little pretty speech that he hath conned,  
But speaking in warm kisses? Will it not  
Be sweet to see my precious William give  
The very first thing he can call his own  
To him who gives him all? My dearest husband,  
Betray me not. Pretend an ignorance;  
And wonder why that cream and bread stand there,  
And why that china bowl. Thy precious boy!

*Maurice.* Thy precious boy! Amelia that child's  
                  heart  
Is like thee as his face.

*Amelia.*           Liker to thee  
Are both—our blessing! What a world of love  
Dwells in that little heart!

*Maurice.*                   Too much! too much!

He is too sensitive. I would he had  
An airy playmate full of mirth and jests.

*Amelia.* Nature's his playmate ; leaves and flowers  
and birds

And the young innocent lambs are his companions ;

He needs no other. In his solitude

He is as happy as the glittering beetle

That lives in the white rose. My precious boy!

*Maurice.* What are these ? Tears ! My own  
Amelia,

Weep'st thou for happiness ? What means this rain

That falls without a cloud ? Fy ! I must chide thee.

*Amelia.* Yes ; thou art right. Useless, not cause-  
less, tears !

They will have way. Forgive me, dearest husband !

This is our wedding-eve. Seven years ago

I stole, a guilty wanderer, from my home,—

My old paternal home !—and with the gush

Of motherly love, another thought rushed in—

My father !

*Maurice.* My Amelia !

*Amelia.* Seven years

Have past since last I saw him ;—and that last !  
The pangs of death were in my heart, when I  
Approached to say, Goodnight ! He had been harsh  
All day ; had pressed Sir Robert's odious love,  
Had taunted at thy poverty—my Maurice !  
But suddenly, when I all vainly tried  
To falter out, Goodnight, in his old tone  
Of fond familiar love, and with the name  
Which from his lips seemed a caress, he said,  
God bless you, Emily ! That blessing pierced  
My very soul. Oft in the dead of night  
I seem to hear it. Would he bless me now ?  
Oh no ! no ! no !

*Maurice.* My own beloved wife

Think not too deeply. There will come a time——

*Amelia.* Oh Maurice ! all the grandeur that she left,

The splendid vanities, ne'er cost thy wife

A sigh, contented in her poverty,

Happy in virtuous love. But that kind voice,  
That tender blessing, that accustomed name  
Of fondness!—Oh! they haunt my very dreams;  
They crowd upon my waking thoughts; then 'most  
When some sweet kindness of my lovely boy,  
Some sign of glorious promise, tells my heart  
How little I deserve——

*Maurice.*

My Emily!

*Amelia.* No, not from thee, not even from thee that  
name.

'Tis sacred to those dear and honoured lips  
That ne'er will breathe it more. I am ungrateful  
Thus to repine, whilst thou and our dear boy——  
Where can he now be loitering? These dark clouds  
Portend a storm.

*Maurice.* Already the large drops

Come pattering on the vine leaves. I will seek——

*Enter WILLIAM.*

*Amelia.* He's here. My William, wherefore didst  
thou stay

So long ? and where's the basket ?

*William.*

Kiss me first.

*Amelia.* Now, where's the basket ?

*William.* I had filled it half,

When a strange gentleman came through the wood

And sat down by me.

*Amelia.*

Did he eat the strawberries ?

*William.* Dear mother, no. He talked to me, and  
then

I could not gather them.

*Amelia.*

What said he, dearest ?

*William.* He asked my name and your's, and where  
I dwelt,

And kissed me.

*Amelia.* And what else ?

*William.*

Called me dear boy,

Said that a storm was coming on, and asked

If I would go with him.

*Maurice.*

Ha ! what said'st thou

To that, my William ?

*William.* No. But then I prayed him  
To come with me to my dear home. Look there !  
Do you not see that tall man in the porch,  
His head against the woodbine ? That is he.

*Amelia.* Dear Maurice, bring him in.

[*Exit MAURICE.*

*William.* I am so sorry  
That it is grown so dark, you will not see  
What a sweet face he has. Only he's older,  
I think he's like you, mother ; and he kissed me  
As you do now, and cried.

*Amelia.* Oh can it be—

*Re-enter MAURICE with LORD GLENTHAM.*

*Lord Glen.* If I intrude—

*Amelia.* That voice ! Oh father ! father !  
Pardon ! Oh pardon !

*Lord Glen.* Madam !—.

*Amelia.* I'm your daughter—  
Call me so, father ! for these seven long years



I have not seen your face. Disown me not !  
Call me your daughter ! Once from your dear lips  
Let me hear that dear sound ! Call me your Emily,  
And bless my dear, dear child ! For such a blessing  
I'd be content to die. William, kneel here ;  
Hold up your innocent hands.

*Lord Glen.*

Rise, Madam ; rise.

*Amelia.* Oh call me once your daughter, only once,  
To still my longing heart ! My William, pray  
For your poor mother.

*William.*

Oh forgive us, Sir,

Pray, pray forgive us !

*Lord Glen.*

Madam, I have sought

A half hour's shelter here from this wild storm ;  
And, as your guest, I pray you to forbear  
These harrowing words. I am but lately risen  
From a sick bed.

*Maurice.* My wife, compose thyself,

Retire awhile,

[*Exit AMELIA.*

Please you to sit my lord.

*Lord Glen.* I thank you, Sir.—You have a pleasant  
cottage,  
Prettily garlanded with rose and woodbine  
And the more useful vine. Has it been long  
Your home ?

*Maurice.* Five years.

*Lord Glen.* You have left the army ?

*Maurice.* Yes.

There was no chance of war ; nor could I drag  
My sweet Amelia through the homeless wanderings  
Of a poor soldier's life. This is a nest,  
However lowly, warm and full of love  
As her own heart. Here we have been most happy.

*Re-enter AMELIA, with a light and a basket.*

*Maurice (meeting her).* Thou tremblest still.

*Amelia.* I could not stay away.

It is such joyful pain to look upon him ;  
To hear his voice ;—I could not stay away.  
William, there is thy basket. Offer it.

*Lord Glen.* No, my dear boy.

*Amelia.* Now blessings on his head

For that kind word !

*Lord Glen.* Surely she was not always

So thin and pale !—Your husband says, Amelia,

That you are happy.

*Amelia.* I have only known

One sorrow.

*Lord Glen.* Ye are poor.

*Amelia.* Not that ! not that !

*Lord Glen.* You have implored my blessing on your  
son ;—

I bless him.

*Amelia.* On my knees I offer up

My thanks to Heaven, and thee. A double blessing

Was that, my father ! on my heart it fell

Like balm.

*Lord Glen.* I will do more. Give me that boy,  
And he shall be my heir. Give me that boy.

*Amelia.* My boy ! Give up my boy !

*Lord Glen.*

Why he must be

A burthen. Ye are poor.

*Amelia.*

A burthen ! William !

My own dear William !

*Lord Glen.*

Miserably poor

Ye are. Deny it not.

*Maurice.*

We earn our bread

By honest labour.

*Amelia.*

And to work for him

Is such a joy ! My William, tremble not !

Weep not, my William ! Thou shalt stay with me

Here on my lap, here on my bosom, William !

*Lord Glen.* Why thou may'st have another child,  
and then—

*Amelia.* Oh never one like this—this dearest child

Of love and sorrow ! Till this boy was born

Wretchedly poor we were ; sick, heartsick, desolate,

Desponding ; but he came, a living sunbeam !

And light and warmth seemed darting through my  
breast,

With his first smile. Then hope and comfort came,  
And poverty, with her inventive arts,  
A friend, and love, pure, firm enduring love ;  
And ever since we have been poor and happy :  
Poor ! no, we have been rich ! my precious child !

*Lord Glen.* Bethink thee for that child, Amelia,  
What fortunes thou dost spurn. His father's love  
Perhaps is wiser.

*Amelia.* Maurice, say.

*Maurice.* My lord,  
'Tis every whit as fond. You have my thanks.  
But in a lowly station he may be  
Virtuous and happy.

*William.* Mother, let me stay  
And I will be so good.

*Amelia.* My darling, yes ;  
Thou shalt not leave me, not for the wide world.

*Lord Glen.* Thou need'st not clasp him so against  
thy bosom ;  
I am no ruffian, from a mother's breast

To pluck her child.—*Amelia*, as his arms  
Wind round thy neck, so thou a thousand times  
Hast clung to mine ; as on his snowy brow  
Thy lips are sealed, so mine a thousand times  
Have prest thy face ; with such a love, *Amelia*,  
As thou dost feel for him.

*Amelia.*            Oh father ! father !

*Lord Glen.* Thou wert a motherless babe, and I to thee  
Supplied both parents. Many a night have I  
Hung over thy sick bed, and prayed for thee  
As thou dost pray for him. And thou, *Amelia*,  
Didst love me then.

*Amelia.*        Did love ! Oh never, never  
Can such love pass away ! 'Tis twined with life.

*Lord Glen.* Then after eighteen years of tender care,  
Fond hopes, and fonder fears, didst thou not fly  
From me, thy father, with a light gay youth,  
A love of yesterday ? Didst thou not leave me  
To die of a broken heart ? *Amelia*, speak !  
Didst thou not ?

*Amelia.* Father ! this is worse than death.

*Lord Glen.* Didst thou not ? Speak.

*Amelia.* I did. Alas ! I did.

*Lord Glen.* Oh miserably have my days crept on  
Since thou didst leave me ! Very desolate  
Is that proud splendid home ! No cheerful meals ;  
No evening music ; and no morning rides  
Of charity or pleasure. Thy trim walks  
Are overgrown ; and the gay pretty room,  
Which thou didst love so well, is vacant now ;  
Vacant and desolate as my sick heart.  
*Amelia,* when thou saw'st me last, my hair  
Was brown as thine. Look on it now, *Amelia.*

*Maurice.* My lord, this grief will kill her. See, she  
writhes

Upon the floor.

*Lord Glen.* And must I go still desolate ?  
I might have found a comfort, had I had  
Something to live for still, something to love ;—  
If she who robbed me of my child had given

Her child instead ;—but all is over now !

She would not trust her father. All ! Farewell !

*Amelia (starting up).* Take him, whilst I have life  
to bid thee ! Take him !

Nay, cling not to me, boy ! Take, take him.—Maurice ?

*William.* I will not leave you, mother.

*Amelia.* Hush ! hush ! hush !

My heart is breaking, William.—Maurice, speak !

*Maurice.* Dearest and best, be it as thou hast willed.

I owed thee a great sacrifice, Amelia ;—

And I shall still have thee !

*Lord Glen.* Thou giv'st him then ?

*Maurice.* I do. But for his own sake, good my lord,

Let not my son be taught to scorn the father

He never will forget ; and let his mother

See him sometimes, or she will surely die.

*Amelia.* I shall die now. My William !

*Lord Glen.* Emily !

*Amelia.* Ha !

*Lord Glen.* My sweet Emily !



*Amelia.*

We are forgiven !

Maurice, we are forgiven !

*Lord Glen.*

My own dear child,

My children, bless ye all ! Forgive this trial ;—

We'll never part again.



# **THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTER.**

**A DRAMATIC SCENE.**

## CHARACTERS.

COLANTONIO DEL FIORE.

ANGELO SOLARIO.

LAURA.

LISABETTA.

SCENE—*An Artist's Painting-Room—Flower-pieces  
finished and unfinished on the walls and the easel—  
a large picture covered with a veil in the front.*

## THE PAINTER'S DAUGHTER.

---

COLANTONIO, *and* LISABETTA.

*Colantonio.* Good Lisabetta, know'st thou of my  
daughter,

Madonna Laura ? I have sought in vain  
Her chamber and her garden bower.

*Lisabetta.* She's still

At vespers, Signor.

*Colantonio.* Aye, I might have guess'd—  
My fair and pensive nun ! She flies the light  
And vain companionship of this gay city ;  
Shunning alike woman her gossip, man  
Her vassal ; coy, demure, retiring, shy,  
Living in Naples here as if the world

Were all made up of the still garden where  
My flowers grow, and this cool quiet room  
Where my old hand, not yet deprived by age  
Of its accustom'd skill, lends them new life  
On canvas. But to seek the lonely church,  
Where, closely veil'd, at vesper-hour she steals  
To muse and pray, my gentle daughter ne'er  
Forsakes her home.

*Lisabetta.* In truth, she is too sad.  
But, good padronè, 'tis thy fault. A maid  
So fair, so rich, should have been match'd long since  
With some gay cavalier. That vow of thine,  
That save a painter, a great painter, none  
Should wed Madonna Laura, may perchance  
Keep the Madonna Laura long a maid.  
For of rare artists some are old, and some  
Are wedded, and some love their single state  
More than a fair young bride. 'Tis certain none  
Hath wooed her to thy heart's content ;—and she—  
Alas, poor child !—likes none of them.

*Colantonio.*

Sage nurse,

Dost love a secret ?

*Lisabetta.*      Aye.*Colantonio.*      A secret too

That thou may'st tell ?

*Lisabetta.*      Canst thou doubt that ?*Colantonio.*      Then listen !

Haste to the jewellers and merchants, furnish

A wardrobe for a princess ;—to the cooks,

Confectioners, and spice-men ; let us have

A banquet fit for kings ;—send round the city

To bid my friends and kindred ;—for the morrow

Is Laura's bridal.

*Lisabetta.*      And her husband ?*Colantonio.*      One

Whose name hath darted into fame, as the star

Of evening springs to light.

*Lisabetta.*      Hast seen him ?*Colantonio.*      No.

But I have seen the master-work by which

He wooes her ;—yonder curtain'd—hark ! She comes.  
No word of this to her.

*Enter LAURA.*

My Laura !

*Laura.*

Take

My veil, good nurse ; the heat is stifling.

*[Exit Lisabetta.*

Father,

What would'st thou of me ? Julio says, that twice  
Thou call'dst for Laura.

*Colantonio.*

I would say to thee—

Sit here by me, thy hand in mine :—this hand  
So soft and warm, yet trembling as it knew  
Its destiny, is claim'd, my Laura.

*Laura.*

Claim'd ?

*Colantonio.* Aye, by a lover, dearest.

*Laura.*

Lover !

*Colantonio.*

Say

A husband, sweet one, if it please thee better.



*Laura.* By whom ?

*Colantonio.* A painter who hath come from Rome  
To seek thy love.

*Laura.* Love ! Do I know him ?

*Colantonio.* No.

*Laura.* Doth he know me ?

*Colantonio.* He says that he has seen  
My beauteous daughter—here's his letter !—Surely  
I think he loves thee.

*Laura.* Loves me ! If he did,  
I love not him ! And wherefore must I wed ?  
Art weary of me, father ?

*Colantonio.* Sweet one, no !

*Laura.* Am I a burthen in thy house ?

*Colantonio.* The joy!  
The pride ! the sunshine !

*Laura.* Prythee, let me bide  
In this dear home, and wear away my days  
In ministering to thee. I have been  
No thriftless housewife. Trust me, thou would'st miss

Thine own poor Laura, when some menial hand  
Shook up thy pillow, when some menial tread  
Broke rudely on thy slumbers—thou would'st miss  
The soft light touch of love,—and at thy meals,  
Thy solitary meals, and the sweet hour  
Of morning meeting, and the tenderer time  
That blends a blessing with good-night !—Oh father,  
Why would'st thou send me from thee ?

*Colantonio.*

Didst thou think

I could part from thee ? Go to ! we are rich  
In worldly pelf ; thy spouse shall dwell with us  
Here in the home thou lov'st. Thou shalt not quit  
Thy pretty garden bower, thy myrtle shade  
For winter, or the summer walk, where grapes  
Hang through the trellis arch amidst their rich  
And clustering leaves. Thou shalt dwell here, as now,  
In thine own pleasant home, thine old fond father  
Blessing thee still at morn and eve. But wed,  
Wed, my own Laura ! Thou art mine only child,  
The child of mine old age, and I would fain

Live thy fair childhood o'er again, would see  
Thy beauty multiplied, would taste that fondest  
And tenderest ecstasy, a grandsire's love.  
Besides, thou know'st my vow. Kings have ere now,  
If chronicles say sooth, offer'd their heirs  
The prize of valor, of brute strength ; I held thee  
At higher price, my Laura, when I swore  
None but a victor in the noble field  
Of Art should win thee, save a painter none  
Should call thee wife.

*Laura.*

Alas !

*Colantonio.*

And I have quell'd

The father's natural longing to extend  
His race ; and, marvelling at thy coldness, joy'd  
To see thee turn from the proud cavaliers  
Of the gay city, with a gentle scorn  
That waved away their wooings as the hand  
Fans off the flies in summer time,—have joy'd  
To see my virgin flower hang in the shade  
From year to year, fresh, dewy, beautiful,

As when it burst the bud—

*Laura.* Oh flatterer, fie!

*Colantonio.* Nestling within its bower, so that no soil  
Of the rude world came near it, scarcely kiss'd  
By the hot breath of the sun. But now, my Laura,  
(*uncovering the picture,*)

Look on that picture; needs no practised eye  
To scan its beauty. Art sits triumphing  
Like nature there, with daylight, life and youth.  
Almost the vital breath hangs on those lips  
Of parted coral; almost the warm blood  
Glow in the modest cheek, and tender thought  
Dwells in the fair broad forehead. 'Tis a young  
Madonna. Look at the soft downcast eye,  
The head bent downward! Look! Hast thou ne'er seen  
Such features?

*Laura (to herself).* 'Tis myself! Younger and  
fairer—

But such as love—And so my braided locks  
I wore parted; so the silken hood,

Intensely blue, lay on my hair. Fool ! Fool !

The very puppet of a dream ! *He was*

A soldier, a brave soldier !

*Colantonio.*

He who painted

That picture loves thee, claims thee, the rich guerdon

Of excellence in art ; with noble pride

He wooes as Theseus erst Hippolyta,

Conquering his lovelier bride.

*Laura.*

Hast seen him ?

*Colantonio.* No.

*Laura.*

His name ?

*Colantonio.*

Zingaro.

*Laura (to herself).* Fool ! fool ! fool ! to think

Because a dream, or some strange trick of the sense,

Of memory, or fancy, some sweet sound

Passing along the air—I had been sitting

Within the bower he loved, entranced in thought,

Fond dreamy thought of him, through the hot noon,

And then I heard the nightingale afar

Or distant viol from the bay, and straight

Deem'd 'twas his fav'rite air—Fool ! fool ! His hand  
Wielded the sword and shield, and deftly rein'd  
The manèged steed ! Little he reck'd of brush  
Or palette ;—then the time !—long, long ere now,  
Hath he forgotten his poor Laura ! Man  
Loves on till hope be dead, then love dies too ;  
'Tis only woman lays her silly heart  
In hope's cold urn, and in that fun'ral nest  
Broods o'er her love.

*Colantonio.*            Well ! hast thou gazed thy fill ?  
It likes me, dearest, that with quivering lips,  
And mutter'd words, and cheeks with passion pale,  
Thou look'st on yonder picture. It hath thaw'd  
Thy maiden coldness: I will send forthwith  
To summon this Zingaro.

*Laura.*                      Father, stay !  
Listen ! I am about to tell a tale  
Too long unutter'd. Listen ! Thou hast talk'd  
Of maiden coldness. I have loved, I love  
With all the ardour that our burning sun

Strikes into woman's heart. Nay, start not, father,  
Nor put me from thee thus ! I'll tell thee all.  
Thou hast no cause to blush for me ; I loved  
Deeply and fervidly, but chastely, father,  
As ever priestess of old Rome adored  
Her god Apollo.

*Colantonio.* Whom ?

*Laura.* Dost thou remember  
Young Angelo Solario, the son  
Of our rich neighbour ?

*Colantonio.* He ! Why he hath left  
Naples these ten years !

*Laura.* And for ten long years  
Dwelt in my heart.

*Colantonio.* Aye, I remember now.  
The Count Solario once proposed to join  
Our children's hands.

*Laura.* Oh good old man !

*Colantonio.* It wrought in me  
Some marvel that he would abase his son

To wed a painter's daughter.

*Laura.* . . . . . Kind old man!

*Colantonio.* But I had vow'd thee ev'n before thy  
birth

To my great art ; its votary, if a boy ;  
If a weak girl, its guerdon. Thus I said  
To Count Solario: " Pluck from thy hot son  
The sword he loves o'erwell, and bid him wield  
The peaceful pencil ; then, if Heaven have given  
The painter's eye, the painter's hand, and (rarest  
And needfullest of all) that inward beam,  
Genius, of painter and of poet bright  
And glorious heritage!—Then when, matured,  
By time and patient toil, he shall achieve  
Some master-work of art, then bid him come,  
And he shall woo my daughter." The old man  
Laugh'd ; and the gallant—I bethink me now  
That Angelo was there—curl'd his proud lip,  
And fix'd his flashing eye, and tightlier grasp'd  
His jewell'd sword.



*Laura.* Spake he ?

*Colantonio.* No word. He went

Forth to the wars that very week ; and then  
The father died ;—Why, Laura mine, thou wast  
A girl when he departed !

*Laura.* Old enough

To love. The day he said, Farewell, I wrote  
Sixteen in my short book of life. Ten years  
This very day ! Oh old enough for love !

*Colantonio.* For fancy, flickering fancy ; such as  
girls

Waste on a momentary toy, a flower,  
A linnet, an embroider'd robe.

*Laura.* For love.

Woman's intense and passionate love. I've seen  
Ten times the changing seasons wax and fade,  
Have seen the spring-tide of my youth pass by  
In absence, hopelessness, despair, and still  
The thought within my heart, the voice that lived  
Within mine ear, the image in mine eye,

Was Angelo. His loved idea hath been  
My sole reality. All waking things,  
The common pageants of this work-day world,  
Pass'd by me as a dream, confused, unmark'd,  
Forgotten ! Then I lived, then my soul woke,  
When in the myrtle arbour, where erewhile  
We spent our childish hours, I could sit  
Alone up-coiled into myself, and muse  
On him, till memory would conjure back  
The very image of his sparkling youth  
Before mine eyes ; the light elastic form  
Whose every motion was a bound, whose walk  
A gay curvet as springy as the pace  
Of his own Barbary steed ; the face as dark  
Even as a Moor's, but brightened by a smile  
Vivid as noonday sunshine, eyes that flash'd  
An insupportable light, and close black curls  
Beneath the plumed cap,—I saw them all !  
And in mine ear the very sound would dwell  
Of that farewell which was a vow, that voice

Which in a tone of prophecy would cry,

“ Laura, I'll wed thee yet ! ”

*Colantonio.*                      This is a phrensy.

*Laura.*    Oh, father, it is love !

*Colantonio.*                      Laura, my sweet one,

The fault is mine.    Thou hast been left o'erlong

Lonely and uncompanion'd, till vain dreams,

And thoughts vainer than dreams, have overborne

Thy better reason.    Ten years, and thou hear'st

Nothing of Angelo ! or he is dead,

Or thou forgotten.

*Laura.*                      Father, listen, father !

Last night—I should have said there was an air,

A rich, yet simple strain, whose burthen well

Became our summer seas, joyous or sad

As the deft singer in his varying mood

Hurried or stayed the measure, always sweet,

Most exquisitely sweet ! That air from boyhood

Angelo loved ; would carol as he walk'd

Along the streets ; sing whilst his plashing oar

Kept time ; and ever and anon a snatch  
Of the familiar strain might travellers list,  
Crossing the sharp sound of his horse's tread.  
That strain by constant and peculiar use  
Became his very own, belonged to him  
As her sweet music to the nightingale,  
Unmatched of any. From a little child  
I knew those notes ; for so would Angelo  
Summon his fairy playmate ;—'twas the lure  
Of gamesome innocence, the call of love,  
For ten years past unsounded,—till last night  
Ling'ring in pensive musings in my bower,  
I heard once more the strain.

*Colantonio.*

A dream ! a dream !

*Laura.* Sure as I live, the sound was there. 'Twas  
not

The vision which at pleasure fancy calls  
Or chases. I arose, I walked ; yet still  
That air in its old sweetness, each division  
Musical as a mermaid's song, was borne

Upon the breeze, though faintlier heard and faintlier  
As I receded. It was Angelo,  
Or of those noises of the air which oft  
Wait round the living, when the parting soul  
Of the beloved—one seeks its Heaven,—the knell  
Which the Death-angel rings.

*(Music without.)*

Hark !

*Colantonio.*

I hear nothing.

*(Music without and nearer.)*

Aye now !

*Laura.* My Angelo, alive or dead,

I will be thine, thine only !

*(Music again without.)*

Hark again !

*Colantonio.* I shame to have hearkened to this tale.

My Laura,

I tell thee thou art vow'd and dedicate

To genius, to Zingaro.

*(Angelo Solario enters behind, unperceived by either speaker.)*

**Laura.**                    I will never  
Wed other man than Angelo. Thy vow  
Is sacrilegious, father, and unblest  
As his, the judge of Israel; his, the king  
Of men, whose sacrificial knife drank deep  
The innocent blood in Aulis. I have wept  
When I have heard the tale of Jephthah's daughter  
Or poor Iphigenia: yet their lot,  
Measured with mine was blessedness. They died.  
But I should linger out a martyrdom  
Of loveless life. There is no law of earth  
Or Heaven that vests thee with a power to barter  
Thy living child for yon vain shadow. Give  
Thy ducats to Zingaro. Stay me not!  
I'll to a nunnery—hold me not! Unless  
To list my vow that nor by force or fraud  
Will I e'er wed—

*Angelo (advancing).* Oh fairest constancy!  
Oh miracle of woman's faith ;

*Laura.* 'Tis he !

His very self! This hand that presses mine,  
These eyes that gaze on me——Just so he looked,  
Just so he spake.—Oh surely I have dreamt  
This ten years' absence! It was yesterday  
We parted !

*Angelo.* Loveliest, most beloved, I come  
To claim thee.

*Colantonio.* She is promised.

*Angelo.* To Zingaro ?

*Colantonio.* Even so, good signor.

*Laura.* Never! Never!

*Angelo.* Sweetest,

Make no rash vows. If thou would crown my love,  
Thou'lt wed Zingaro. Nay, snatch not away  
This struggling hand!—the hand Zingaro won  
For Angelo! Hast thou not read me yet?  
Must I needs tell thee——

*Laura.*

Oh no, no, no, no!

Thou art he! Ye are one! And thou for me hast laid  
Thy state aside, hast flung away thy sword,  
Hast toil'd in silence and in secrecy,  
For me! for me! Father, speak to him! Father,  
Speak to him!

*Colantonio.* Calm thee, mine own Laura. Signor,  
Thou hear'st her: says she sooth? Art thou indeed  
The famed Zingaro? Is this master-work  
Of painting thine?

*Angelo.* Oh now I see that work,  
That master-work of nature, whose rare beauty  
I strove to copy, faint and feeble seems  
My portraiture! Such as it is, the piece  
Is mine.

*Colantonio.* My son!

*Angelo.* My father!

*Colantonio.* Wherefore change  
Thy name? and why not say—

*Angelo.* Sir! When I left



Thy presence, even when thou bad'st me wield  
The peaceful pencil, and by toil and time  
Climb the high steep of art, or ere I wooed  
Thy daughter, even as thou spak'st, my soul  
Was fix'd to its great purpose, and almost  
Had I flung at thy feet my sword, and vow'd  
To win the prize or die ; yet fear and shame  
Master'd my speech, and I went forth resolved  
And silent.

*Colantonio.* Whither didst thou go ?

*Angelo.*

To Rome,

The shrine of art, on love's own pilgrimage.  
My friends and kinsmen deem'd me at the camp ;  
None save my father guess'd—and, when he died,  
I was of all forgotten.

*Laura.*

Not of all.

*Angelo.* Of all, save one the faithfullest. Mean-  
time,

A nameless student, day and night I toil'd

For that dear faithful one. From my swart skin  
My laughing comrades called me oft in jest  
*Zingaro* \*, till at last the name of scorn  
Was crown'd by fame. Oh very dear to me  
The name that won thee, Laura !

*Colantonio.*

Will she wed

*Zingaro* ?

*Laura.* Will I !—Father, was my love

A frenzy ?

*Colantonio.* Sweet one, love and constancy

Have wrought this blessedness. Receive thy bride,

Thy twice-won bride, *Zingaro* !

\* Gipsy.—The groundwork of the foregoing scene will be found in Mr. Mills' very interesting "*Travels of Theodore Ducaa*." I have only taken the liberty to change the name of my hero from Antonio to Angelo. A similar anecdote has been related of several painters, especially of Quintin Matsys, the celebrated blacksmith of Antwerp—though I have for obvious reasons preferred the Italian version of the story. What could one do with a blacksmith and a Dutchman, and a man who painted misers counting their gold ?

*Laura.*

He but gives

My hand. My heart is Angelo's.

*Angelo.*

Mine! Mine!

Both mine!



# FAIR ROSAMOND.

## A DRAMATIC SCENE.

---

The following scene is chiefly taken from the popular ballad of the same name in Bishop Percy's *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*. Some anachronisms will, I fear, be found, besides those contained in the beautiful legend which forms the groundwork of my story ; but at an age so remote, and with a subject, to say the best of it, apocryphal, a strict adherence to the old tradition will hardly be demanded.

## CHARACTERS.

HENRY THE SECOND, *King of England.*

QUEEN ELEANOR,

FAIR ROSAMOND.

CONSTANCE, }  
MABEL,        } *Rosamond's women.*

*Archers, &c. attending on the King and Queen.*

*Scene. An Apartment in Rosamond's bower at Woodstock.*

## FAIR ROSAMOND.

---

*Enter CONSTANCE meeting MABEL.*

*Constance.* Alone, good Mabel? Hath not our fair  
lady

Won homeward from the chase?

*Mabel.* But now I left her  
In the great hall, prattling right merrily  
To Pierce the white-haired forester, the old  
And merry forester. Hark! thou may'st hear  
Her sweet wild laughter now, echoing along  
The gallery. Hark! hark! How like a gay  
And reckless child! and how the old man's voice  
Comes chuckling in between!

*Constance.* What makes he here?

*Mabel.* He came to warn our lady to retire  
Within her secret bower, and triply guard  
The outer gate. He dreads a quick surprise  
From powerful foes.

*Constance.* And Reginald Fitz-Urse,  
The valiant captain of the guard, hath gone  
This very morn to Warwick, to attend  
His dying father. None remain save raw  
And ignorant striplings. What hath scared old Pierce ?

*Mabel.* A clerk of Oxford passing through the chase  
Brought tidings that last night a royal train  
Reposed within the city, he believed  
The Queen herself—but Lady Rosamond  
Had yester-eve fond missives from the king  
Whom she expects at noon ; and makes a mock  
Of Pierce's warning, mimicking the dull  
And purblind scholar who mistook her bright  
And peerless Henry for the stiff and gaunt  
And withered Eleanor; dancing for glee,  
Clapping her hands and laughing at each turn



Of her quick fancy, gentle as young lambs  
Midst all her gambols, and more beautiful  
Than blossoms of the field. 'Tis a light heart.

*Constance.* Think'st thou so ?

*Mabel.* Surely.

*Constance.* Hast thou dwelt with her  
A two months' space, and deem'st her light of heart ?

*Mabel.* Full surely. Grant that sometimes she will  
weep

The long day through, and watch the tedious night,  
Yet soon the veriest trifle will relume  
Her smile of joy.

*Constance.* Ay, for an hour, and then  
To tears again. She bore a light heart, Mabel,  
When I first knew her in her father's halls.  
Oh what a peerless flower the spoiler's hand  
Marred in the cropping !—poor, poor Rosamond !

*Mabel.* Sure she is happy when king Henry comes.

*Constance.* Ay then, for with idolatry so blind  
She loves her royal lover, that each look,

Each thought, each feeling is absorbed in that  
Fond worship. In those brief and stolen hours  
Fair Rosamond is happy; but they leave  
Remorse behind. She comes.

*Enter ROSAMOND.*

*Rosamond.*                      How now, good maidens !  
Ye are sad to-day. Constance, hath Mabel told thee  
Of Pierce and that same learned clerk ? I've laughed  
Till I'm a-weary, girl.

*Constance.*                      Yet, gracious lady,  
Were it not wiser to withdraw awhile  
Within the secret bower ?

*Rosamond.*                      Dost thou believe  
That legend, Constance ? Hath thy woman's fear  
So mastered thee that thou too dost mistake  
King Henry's plumed helm for the starched coif  
Of haughty Eleanor ? And yet I thank thee,  
Thy fears spring from thy love. Go take my purse  
To good old Pierce ; the faithful wretch is full  
Of honest care.                      [*Exit CONSTANCE.*]

Now reach my broidery, Mabel,  
The flowered scarf. Last night I dreamt of flowers,  
What may that dream denote ?

*Mabel.* Good, surely madam.

*Rosamond.* Chiefly of roses.

*Mabel.* Certes, lady, good.

*Rosamond.* 'Twas looking on the scarf reminded me  
Of that gay dream. Methought I was a spirit  
In a bright world made up of sun and flowers,  
A lonely spirit, and my task to deck  
A vast triumphal temple, such as pilgrims  
Tell of in far-off countries, to entwine  
Rich garlands round its thousand fluted shafts  
Of whitest alabaster. There I sate  
Framing my wreaths profuse of various flowers—  
For every flower was there of every hue  
And of all seasons ;—there I sat and sang,  
Bathed in the fragrance of light sunny showers,  
And plied my joyful task ; or gladder rose  
And fitted on light pinions, round and round

The snowy columns twisting single wreaths,  
Or richly interlacing, or from shaft  
To shaft suspending the superb festoon  
Like an inverted rainbow. There they hung  
Unwithered, fresh, as on the parent bough,  
Nourished by the sweet air; and there I plied  
My task unwearied,—till the robin's song  
Rang through the casement and awakened me :  
Now what may that dream bode ?

*Mabel.*

Good, good, dear lady.

*Rosamond.* Say'st thou so, wench ? 'Tis a fair  
augury.

Where hast thou laid the threads of gold ? Will that  
Be like the Pensée ?—So the Normans call  
The pretty blossom, but our English maids  
Give it a dearer name, the sweet heart's-ease ;  
This scarf is for king Henry. I must not  
Forget the heart's-ease.—Constance loiters long.

*Mabel.* Shall I go call her ?

*Rosamond.*

No. When she returns.

We'll ask her for some merry roundelay,  
Some pleasant ditty of Provence; for Constance,  
Staid and demure although she be, hath store  
Of mirthful minstrelsy. I would beguile  
The hour till Henry comes,—my princely Henry,  
My king, my love.

*Mabel.*                      He comes to-day ?

*Rosamond.*                                      To-day,

At noon to-day—Oh how I love to speak  
Over and over the glad words which tell  
His coming, as if that blest time were made  
By every repetition doubly sure.  
He comes at noon—when yonder shadow cast  
From the rich oriel window, even lies  
Upon the floor, thou'lt hear the tramp of steeds  
And clang of trumpets and the rapid tread  
Of his light foot. At noon—not sooner, wench;  
For he is punctual as beseemeth one  
Whose will is clock to many, nor foreruns

The hour of meeting though 'tis me he meets.  
At noon, when yonder sluggish shadow—surely  
'Tis fixed in one eternal slope!—lies straight  
Upon the floor. How blest shall I be then!—  
Till then how slow and weary is the pause,  
How long the last sad melancholy hour  
Of expectation!

*Mabel.* 'Twill soon pass, dear lady!

*Rosamond.* Pass! Look how yonder shadow sleeps!

'T had past

More lightly in the woods midst falling leaves  
And short quick flight of birds—But then I might  
Have missed him, and so lost sweet precious minutes  
Of his brief stay, or have encountered him  
Midst the keen gazes of his knightly train,  
And so have lost the o'erflowing gush of joy  
At our first meeting. In this oriel chamber  
He looks to find me still; I'll wait him here.  
The shadow stirs not.

*Mabel.* If thou would'st but cease  
To watch it, gentle lady, or could'st think  
On any theme save one—

*Rosamond.* Could think on aught  
Save him !—Oh thou hast never loved !—Could speak  
Of aught save Henry, when each moment brings him  
Nearer to these fond arms. If thou had'st loved  
Thou would'st have known that I must talk of him  
And of him only.

*Mabel.* Not of thy fair children ?

*Rosamond.* Not even of them. Yet would that they  
were here  
My pretty gentle Geoffrey, and that boy  
Elder and bolder, my stout William,—he,  
Who at some six years old already draws  
His father's sword, already flashes forth  
His father's spirit—my brave knightly boy!  
Oh would that they were here, to shed fresh charms  
On this blest meeting ! to make wholly perfect  
Their mother's happiness !

*Mabel.*                                They dwell apart  
By the King's orders ?

*Rosamond.*                    Ay, for their more safety.  
The jealous Queen in her stern cruelty  
Threatened to seize the innocent babes ; and he,  
My Henry—Oh with what a tenderness  
He won me to resign them ! My own Henry !  
Lies not the shadow straighter ?

*Mabel.*                                Somewhat, madam.

*Rosamond.*    'Twill soon be even. Did I never tell  
                                 thee  
The story of his wooing ? Listen, girl,  
Sit here and listen. 'Twas a glorious day,  
A glorious autumn day, as bright and clear  
As this, the small white clouds now softly sailing  
Along the deep blue sky, now fixed and still,  
As the light western breeze, arose or sank  
By fits—A glorious day ! I and my maids  
Sat by the lakelet in my father's park  
Working as we do now ; right merrily,



For young and innocent maids are in their nature  
Gay as the larks above their heads. The scene  
Was pleasant as the season ; not a spot  
Of the Lord Clifford's wide demesne could vie  
With this in beauty. Woods on every side  
Ash, oak, and beech, sloped downward to the clear  
And quiet waters, overhung by tufts  
Of fern and hazel and long wreaths of briars,  
Only one little turfy bank was free  
From that rich underwood—there we sate bending  
Over a tapestry loom, until we heard  
A horn sound right above us, and espied  
A hunter threading the rude path which wound  
To our sequestered bower. Oh what a sight  
It was ! the managed steed, white as the foam  
Of some huge torrent, fiery, hot, and wild,  
Yet reined into a tameness by his bold  
And graceful rider, winning with slow steps  
His way mid those huge trees ; now seen, now lost,

Now in bright sunshine, now in deepest shade ;  
The red autumnal tints of those old woods  
Contrasting well the huntsman's snow-white steed  
And garb of Lincoln green. No sign bore he  
Of prince or king, save in the sovran grace  
Of his majestic port, his noble brow,  
His keen commanding eye. My maidens fled  
Soon as they saw the stranger.

*Mabel.*

And thou, lady ?

*Rosamond.* Why I too thought to fly, but loitered on  
Collecting the bright silks and threads of gold,  
Careful excuse that to myself I made  
For lingering there, till he approached ; and then  
When I in earnest turned to go, he stayed me  
With such a smile and such a grace, and craved  
My aid so piteously, for he had lost  
Comrades and hounds and quarry and himself  
In that morn's chase, that I was fain to proffer  
Guidance to our old castle.

**Mabel.**

**He went with thee?**

*Rosamond.* No. At Lord Clifford's name he started.

—Mabel,

Shun thou the lover that shall start to hear  
Thy father's name.—With slight excuse he rode  
To seek his partners of the chase. But oft  
From that day forth we met beside the lake ;—  
And often when November storms came fast,  
Driving against the casement, I have wept  
Drop for drop with the sky, if my dear father  
In his fond care forbad his Rosamond  
To brave the raging tempest ; all my heart  
Was in that bare damp wood and on the bank  
Of that dark water, where my lover stood  
To wait my coming, patiently as sits  
The nightingale beside his brooding mate.  
How could I chuse but love him ?

**Mabel.**

## Didst thou know

**Thy lover for the king ?**

*Rosamond.*

**Not till my love**

Had been confessed ; then he in turn confessed  
The fatal secret. What a coil of wild  
And desperate passions woke within my heart  
Fear, shame, and pride, and anger, but true love  
O'ermastered all ; we fled, and I am here.

*Mabel.* Alas !

*Rosamond.* Nay, wherefore cry, Alas ?—My Father—  
I must not think of him—Out on thee, wench !  
That sigh of thine hath saddened me, hath brought  
Fond thoughts of days of old—the blessed days  
When I was innocent and happy ! Girl,  
Thou hast a father, an old white-haired man  
Who loves thee. Leave him not, I charge thee, Mabel !  
Bring not those white hairs to the grave with shame  
For thy foul sin !

*Mabel.* Oh weep not, dearest lady !  
Look how the shadow hath crept on ! and surely  
I hear a clamour at the gate— (*Noise without.*)

A tumult

Even in the Hall. Dost thou not hear ?

*Rosamond.*

'Tis he,

My king ! my Henry ! Quick, let's meet him !—No,  
I must first dry my tears—Yet did I ever  
Meet Henry without tears ?—Where loiters he ?

*Mabel.* And what may mean that cry ? The noise  
comes near ;

Heaven grant that all be well !.

*Enter* CONSTANCE.

*Rosamond.*

Hath aught befallen

The King ? Is Henry safe ? Speak ! Speak !

*Constance.*

Fly, Madam,

Fly to the secret chamber. Our brave knights  
Are overpowered ; and we undone. The Queen  
Approaches.

*Enter* QUEEN ELEANOR, *Guards, &c.*

*Eleanor.* Minion, she is here. Fly not,

Proud concubine.

*Rosamond.* I think not of it.

*Eleanor.*

Guard

Each entrance well that she escape not. Women,  
Stand from about her. Wherefore kneel'st thou there?

*Rosamond.* For mercy—Oh thy looks are terrible—  
For mercy and for pardon.

*Eleanor.* Dar'st thou kneel  
To me for pardon? Dost thou know me?

*Rosamond.* Yes;  
Thou art a Queen, a mighty Queen, but still  
A woman!—Women should be pitiful,  
Great Queens should pardon.

*Eleanor.* I am Henry's wife.  
Dost ask for mercy now? Aye sob, and shiver,  
And dash thy face against the ground, and lie  
Prostrate before me, minion. 'Tis my hour—

(*To one of her attendants.*)

Bring in the bowl, good Hubert!—I have been  
A mockery of a Queen, whilst thou hast borne  
The power, the state, the reverence; enshrined  
Within thy bower, like some vile Indian Idol,  
Partner of Henry's heart, and more than partner

Of the fool people's love. The very courtiers  
Grey-bearded counsellors, and valiant knights  
And learned Bishops all have brought their suits  
To Rosamond, fair Rosamond—I'll mar  
That boasted beauty.—Bring the bowl, I say.—  
Where be her sons ?

*Rosamond (starting up).* Oh Heaven is merciful !  
They are not here ! They are safe ! Their innocent  
lives

Are spared ! I thank thee, Lord, that in thy pity  
Refused the mother's prayer. My boys are safe !

*Eleanor.* I'll reach them, harlot, yet.

*Rosamond.* Oh no, thou wilt not.

Thou art a mother ; thou hast boys as young  
As mine, aye, and as fair. I saw one once,  
A sweet and gracious child, he smiled upon me—

*Eleanor.* He knew thee not.

*Rosamond.* He smiled upon me, Queen,  
And in my heart I blest him. 'Twas thy Geoffrey.  
If e'er thou meet my children, think on him,

And thou'lt not harm them. Not to be in truth

King Henry's wife, could I have injured him.

*Eleanor.* Peace! smooth and wily serpent! I came  
hither

Not to hold parley, but to execute

A needful justice on a desperate sinner.

*Rosamond.* We are all sinners.

*Eleanor.* Bring the cup. Drink that,  
Or bare thy bosom to the sword.

*Rosamond.* 'Tis poison!

*Eleanor.* Swift sudden poison. Drink!

*Rosamond.* Not yet! Not yet!

The sternest justice yields some little pause

Betwixt the sentence and the death. Grant thou

Some respite for dear charity. An hour!

Only an hour!

*Eleanor.* Drink, minion.

*Rosamond.* I must die,  
I knew that when I saw thee; but unshriven,  
Without the rite of holy Church, or prayer





*(Enter KING HENRY, and Guards.)*

*Henry.* Wherefore be the warders changed  
And Reginald Fitz-Urse——Queen Eleanor !  
I read the riddle now—but I am here  
To guard thee, Rosamond, and clear thy bower  
Of these stern visitants. Avoid the castle  
All ye of the Queen's train ! Sir Hugh de Clinton,  
See that my bidding be obeyed, and line  
The courts with my stout yeomen.

*[Exeunt the Queen's guards.]*

So ! Fair Madam

I prythee back to Windsor ! I am loath  
To use a husband's power—ay or a king's—  
But tempt me not !—I know thee, Eleanor,  
And so far can endure—no farther. Back  
To Windsor, Queen ! Yon gentle trembler sits  
Shivering like a new caged bird—Depart  
I warn thee, Madam ! For as I'm a knight,  
As I'm a man, I cannot chuse but soothe  
The lovely wretch that suffers for my sin.

Wilt thou not bid me welcome, sweet? nor thank  
The precious chance that brought me here to change  
Hatred and malice into love and joy?

*Rosamond.* Joy!

*Henry.* Did she speak? Her gladsome voice  
is changed;

And that sweet word rang like a knell! Take comfort,  
My Rosamond.

*Rosamond.* Comfort! But 'tis a comfort  
To see thee once again, once ere we part.

*Henry.* Who hath dared speak of parting? Who  
could part  
Two hearts that loved like ours? Who dare to sever  
King Henry from his love?

*Eleanor.* A mightier king,  
The mightiest of the mighty—Death. Yon bowl  
Hath well avenged me.

*Henry.* Poisoned! Fiend accurst,  
Full of all vice that woman ever knew,  
Wanton in youth, and jealous in thine age,

And now a murderess, look to find a vengeance  
Stupendous as thy crimes !

*Rosamond.*

Henry !

*Henry.*

My Rose,

My murdered Rose, how could I waste a thought  
On aught save thee ! Go ransack all the land  
For costly antidotes, search all the earth  
For skilful leeches ! Say, I'll give my crown  
To him that saves my Rosamond. My fairest,  
Thou shalt not die.

*Eleanor.*

The crowns of the whole earth  
Could not preserve her life an hour. The draught  
Was deadly. Thou wilt see her boasted charms  
A loathsome mass in thine embraces.

*Henry.*

Slay

Yon fiend ! She maddens me.

*Rosamond.*

Nay, touch her not.

Forgive me, 'tis the first time I e'er crost

A wish of thine——She must not die.

*Henry.*

Had she

**A heart, those words would kill her.—Oh my Rose,  
That I could die with thee !**

*Rosamond.* No! thou must live  
For England, for thy children. My poor boys!  
Could I have seen them—send not, 'tis too late!  
A little space, and thy poor Rosamond  
Shall join her kindred clay. My boys! say to them  
That with her parting breath their mother blessed—  
Oh no! no! no! I have no right to bless  
As virtuous mothers have. I am a curse  
To all my kindred, even to them who drew  
Their being from my crime. Let them forget  
Their mother's very name; and breed them humbly—  
Promise me that, my Henry.

*Henry.* Rosamond  
They shall be bred as Princes.

*Rosamond.* Oh no ! no !  
Humbly, most humbly. I was ne'er ambitious  
'Midst all my sins. I loved thee for thyself  
Not for thy rank. 'Twas not the king I worshipped,

**But Henry, mine own Henry ! Breathe them humbly  
And say to William (for his mounting spirit  
Already fears me) that he take no vengeance  
For this rash deed.**

*Henry.* He shall not need. That task  
Is mine.

*Rosamond.* That task is one forbid by Heaven.  
I do conjure thee, Henry, by the love  
Thou bear'st me, for the weal of thine own soul—

*Eleanor.* Go to, I fear him not.

*Henry.* I thought to slay her,  
But that were mercy. She shall live.—Why leave  
My circling arms, my Rosamond? Why drag  
Thy trembling form toward yonder murderess?

*Rosamond.* Madam !

Nay, stay me not—'twill ease my heart. I am dying  
Untimely midst my sins, unshriven, unblest,  
By priest or bell, a sinner ! yet one duty  
Even I may fill at this last hour, to part  
In charity.

*Eleanor.* Dar'st thou to pardon me,  
Harlot, adulteress ?

*Rosamond.* Queen, for that foul sin  
I crave thy pardon ! Oh forgive me, Madam,  
As I forgive——

*Henry.* She sinks ! Off with yon fiend,  
To prison ! quick ! off with her !

*(The guards take Eleanor away.)*

My beloved,  
How art thou ?

*Rosamond.* Easier.

*Henry.* Oh she'll live ! She'll live !  
No ; no. Her cheeks grow whiter ; and her hands  
Cold, cold ; and scarce my trembling arms sustain  
Her sinking form.

*Rosamond.* I'm easier.

*Henry.* Is there aught  
That I can do to pleasure thee ? My sweet one,  
Speak to me.

*Rosamond.* My poor children !

*Henry.* Are they not  
My children, Rosamond ? Those boys will be  
My only comfort. I shall love them, dearest,  
Too fondly.

*Rosamond.* And my father, my poor father !

*Henry.* He shall be mine.

*Rosamond.* I'm easier. Turn my face  
Toward the south. The sunshine from the oriel  
Lies straight upon the floor ! 'Tis noon.—The hour  
I longed for, and I've heard thy voice and felt  
The pressure of thy lip, aye and been clasped  
To that fond heart ! We have been sinful, Henry,  
And therefore are we doomed ; have loved too well,  
And therefore—Oh that this poor life of mine  
May expiate our crimes ! that thou may'st be  
Happy and fortunate !

*Henry.* Pray for thyself,  
Sweetest ! What happiness is left for me  
When thou art gone ? Think but of thee.

*Rosamond.*

I cannot



If sin it be to love, that sin cleaves to me—

Henry! my king! I'm faint.

*Henry.*

She falls! she dies!

Aye wet her temples with that essence.—Rosamond!

Is she gone, Constance? Is the spirit fled?

My eyes are dizzy. One kiss more! Her breath

Is gone; her lips are cold;—She's dead, quite dead;

And I am left alone and desolate.

My Rosamond, my love!



# **ALICE.**

**A DRAMATIC SCÈNE.**



The scenery of this little drama is taken from the beautiful grounds of the Great House at Arborfield, near Reading. The characters and the story are entirely fictitious.

## **CHARACTERS.**

**MRS. NEVILLE.** .

**HENRY.**

**ALICE.**

## ALICE.



SCENE.—*A path by the side of a river. Henry in the foreground ; Mrs. Neville and Alice under some trees at the side.*

*Henry.* This is the spot so loved, so long unseen !  
The very spot ! the brimming Loddon here,  
Winding through grassy fields, gives back the blue  
And dappled sky so brightly, that it seems  
Part of another Heaven. There is the mill,  
Thwarting its course—the old and rustic mill,  
With its white low-browed cot, and wooden bridge  
That seems, yet is not, dangerous ; there the church  
With its square tower ; and nearer that vast pile  
Whose pointed roofs and porch and pinnacles  
And carved and massive windows give a date

Prouder than the huge oaks which overtop  
The clustered chimneys—cold and cheerless now !  
No wreathing smoke bids welcome to the old  
Ancestral hall, vacant and desolate,  
But beautiful—how beautiful ! The shrubs  
Grown into trees and blossoming profuse,  
As in those flowery forests where they live  
Seen but of Heaven.—Ah ! beneath the trees—  
'Tis they ! It must be they ! That slender woman,  
Bending her fair and patient cheek o'er work  
Scarce whiter than her hands—the widow's cap—  
The close grey gown—the undying loveliness—  
It is herself ! And that young graceful girl,  
Nor child nor woman, who in colourless  
And sculptural beauty stands, severely pure,  
Pale as a water-lily—that is Alice !  
Her eyes—would I could see her eyes !—are sealed  
On that unconscious book.—I'll speak to them.

*(Advancing to Mrs. Neville and Alice).*

Madam, I pray you pardon me !—This path,

So green and overgrown—doth this path lead  
To Cleveland Hall ?

*Mrs. Neville.* It doth—alas ! it did.

The hall is silent now and tenantless ;  
None treads the moss-grown road.

*Henry.* What, is there none  
Within the inhospitable walls, to cheer  
The poor man's heart ? Not one to ope the gate  
To curious strangers, or the humbler wants  
Of the sick way-worn traveller ? What, none ?  
Not even a servant ?

*Mrs. Neville.* None. You lean your head  
Against the trees, as sick or weary too.  
Oh, rest you here awhile ! Find such a seat  
As mine, midst these old roots ; and if you need  
Refreshment—

*Henry.* Stir not, Madam ! my weak words  
May ill express strong gratitude. To sit  
Here is the perfectest repose ; amid  
Such shade, such freshness, where the greenness falls

Like dew upon the burning eyes ; such smells  
Swinging from the lime blossom, and the breath  
Of flaunting woodbines ; and such coil of bees  
Gathering their harvest. It is worth a life  
Of that dull common joy which men call bliss,  
So to be weary, and to find such rest.

*Mrs. Neville.* You come from far ?

*Henry.* From Oxford here, to meet  
The heir of yon fair hall.

*Alice.* Ah ! he knows *him* !

*Henry (aside).* Now those stars shine upon me !

*Alice.* You know *him* !  
Mother, he knows Lord Claremont.

*Mrs. Neville.* Oh, the book  
Is closed, which this long morning hath absorbed  
Thy every sense—thou hast not seen thy young  
And dear companions, when they wooed thee forth  
To the gay hay-field ; hast not heard my voice—  
Not though that voice called Alice.

*Alice.* Not heard thee !



Mother, not thee !—Oh fie upon thy charm,

Sweet poesy !—Not hear thy voice !

*Henry.*

What lay

Hath such enchanting power ?

*(She gives him the book).*

The Faërie Queen !

Oh gentle poet of the summer sky,

The fresh air, the green earth ! how suited thou

To this wild pastoral scene, and this young hand

Trembling with modesty !

*Mrs. Neville.*

She'll hang all day

Over that tale of Una.

*Henry.*

But this shower

Of snowy rose-leaves—sure it was her mark !—

Dropt from that tenderest page, where Britomart,

Pining for love, heartsick and desolate,

Is by her old nurse comforted and cheered,

And hushed to sleep like an o'erweary babe.

Euripides himself, in the famed scene

Of Phædra—no, nor Shakspeare, when he melts

The very soul with Juliet's tender woe—  
Touched not more truly the witch-notes of love  
Than that old simpleness.

*Mrs. Neville.*                      Yet Britomart—

Alice, it was a silly maid that loved  
A picture.

*Alice.* Mother, no! Oh no! She loved  
The high idea, the bright imagining  
Of her own soul. Gentleness, valour, truth,  
And lofty faith, and noble thought—'twas these  
She loved; the magic image did but clothe,  
But lend a form to the diviner mind  
Which her pure fancy moulded.

*Henry (aside).*                      Now she stoops  
To kiss her mother's hand!—Sweet artifice  
Of maiden shame, to hide the crimson glow  
Her ardent speech hath brought upon the cheek  
That was all lily! (*aloud*) Go not!    [*Exit ALICE.*]

*Mrs. Neville.*                      She is gone  
To join her youthful comrades.

*Henry.*

Ay, she moves

Towards them with a gentle dignity,  
As yonder cygnet glides along the stream.  
Look ! what a picture 'tis to see her pause  
Under the brow of that lone summer-house  
Which overhangs the water, overhung  
With ivy and wild woodbine, backed with firs  
So old and vast and shadowy, that they lend  
A blackness to the deep rank grass ; and crowned  
With poplars of such growth, such spiral height—  
The stately columns of eternal Rome  
Matched not the pair of living monuments  
That shoot their tapering heads into the sky.  
She pauses there, the beautiful !—amidst  
That beauty, lifting her fair hand to shade  
The light from those blue eyes—she passes now  
Beneath the firs—she disappears. Yon scene—  
Hath she not left a track of brightness there,  
That living sunbeam ?—Yon fair scene is made  
For happiness.—You sigh.

*Mrs. Neville.* Oh, once it was !

Once—but that beauty now strikes to my soul  
A shivering chillness—Oh, it smiles upon me,  
As the cold moon upon the colder grave.  
Thou know'st Lord Claremont—that fair hall once owned  
Another master. Hast thou never heard  
The tale of shame and sorrow ?

*Henry.* I have heard,

Darkly, mysteriously, enough to wake  
Deep pity. Would'st thou—Stranger as I am  
I dare not ask—

*Mrs. Neville.* Stranger although thou be,  
There is a pity in thy voice, thine eyes,  
Thy smile, that looks like comfort : thou art born  
To listen to sad stories. Didst thou ever  
Hear of Sir Edward Mortimer ?

*Henry.* The grandsire

Of this young Lord ? the master of yon grand  
And reverend pile ? Often.

*Mrs. Neville.* He was a man

Of that free spirit, which doth scatter bliss  
As winds the summer blossom. In his eye  
Dwelt mirth, and kindness in his speech, and love  
In his warm heart—love of all human kind.  
Something men spake of wildness in his youth ;  
But when, after long travel, he brought home  
A lovely lady and two cherub babes,  
Seemed not a wiser or a better man.

*Henry.* And she ?

*Mrs. Neville.* She was a thing of life and light  
And beauty. Such a vision as erst filled  
The dreamy soul of Guido, when he drew  
His bright Aurora. Such a brilliant flush  
Of health, and joy, and youth—eternal youth !  
Year after year rolled on, and stole no charm  
No smile from that fair woman. Strangers saw her  
Propped on her son's supporting arm, or throwing  
Her white hand round her daughter's waist, and deemed  
She was their younger sister. Oh, how proud  
That noble son was of her peerless grace !

With what a sweet and tender flattery  
He spake, and with what smiling blushes she  
Would listen ! 'Twas a house of love. The daughter—

*Henry.* Was she not like thy Alice ?

*Mrs. Neville.* Ay, as like

As two white roses. Thou canst scarce have seen  
The Lady Claremont ? Thou art all too young.

*Henry.* I've seen her portrait, where young purity  
Is pictured to the life. She sits upon  
A rock by the sea-shore, her starry eyes  
Fixed on the gloomy sky, as if to wait  
The raging of the storm.

*Mrs. Neville.* It came ! It came !

Poor Mary Mortimer ! almost a child,  
Lord Claremont saw and loved her ; she loved him ;  
And they were wedded. After a brief year  
Of perfect bliss he died, and she returned  
To the paternal home, with one fair boy,  
To see her father die.

*Henry.* Alas ! alas !

*Mrs. Neville.* Sigh not for them that died—Sigh  
not for them—

They were the happy. Years had passed away,  
And grief was gone, another Edward ruled  
Within the old hereditary hall—  
Another kinder, dearer—all built up  
Of dignity and honour. He had wooed  
And wedded a young maiden, only rich  
In love. The gentle countess and her boy  
Dwelt with them, and his mother with her looks  
Of beauty, her glad voice, her step of youth.  
Oh, how the days flew then, when I—for I  
Am that most wretched wife that was most blest !  
Oh, how the days flew by, whilst Alice clung  
Around my knée, half jealous when she saw  
My William at my breast; or tottered round  
Those giant trees ; or on the velvet lawn  
Rolled in her joy, lisping her half-learnt words  
To the dear cousin, whose sweet serious eyes  
Pursued her every motion ! kind and frank,

And noble boy ! I seem to see him now,  
With his bright face peeping among the boughs  
Of yonder sweet briar, whilst my fairy girl  
Sought her dear playmate, and the summer sun  
Declining, streamed a glory round her form ;  
And I stood watching them almost with tears—  
So the deep gladness stirred me—when across  
Her lovely childish voice, and the gay laugh  
Of the hidden boy, came quick shrill piercing cries  
Of sudden-woe ; and rushing to the house,  
I saw that beauteous mother on the floor,  
Pale, speechless, prostrate, writhing ; whilst her son  
With folded arms, and withering eyes, looked on ;  
And her distracted daughter shrieked in gusts  
Of helpless agony. Why shak'st thou thus ?

*Henry.* Man is not made of stone. Be brief. Even  
now

I hear her screaming ! Oh, be brief !

*Mrs. Neville.*

The boy

Had followed me ; and trembling with the new



Strange sense of misery, seized my husband's hand,  
And looked up in his face. Then, then he burst  
From dreadful silence to more dreadful speech,  
Cursing the mother at his feet, the child  
Within his hand, the blessed light of day,  
And life, and love! Darkly the tale of woe  
Came from him. That fair, panting, crouching thing,  
Quivering beneath her shame, she had confessed  
Her frailty. Not till after Edward's birth  
Did his dead father wed her—he had been  
An innocent usurper. At one word  
We lost our name, our wealth, our very home.  
Delay had maddened him : before the sun  
Was set, we and our children had passed forth  
From this fair heritage, poor wanderers  
Upon the earth. The gentle heiress staid,  
Death-struck with the disgrace that seemed to stain  
Even her white purity. In one short month  
Her passing-bell had knolled.

*Henry.*

Poor—poor—But she.

The wretchedest, the mother ?

*Mrs. Neville.*

Ere she rose

From off the ground where she had plunged her shame,  
Her brown hair turned to white. She died not : youth  
And joy and beauty died ; but she lives on  
In penitence.

*Henry.* And he ?

*Mrs. Neville.*

Oh what a slow

And weary death is grief when it contends  
With manhood's healthful prime ! We wandered on  
'Through many lands. He could not bear the sight  
Or sound of aught familiar—his own name  
Was as a dagger to him ; every smile  
Of his unconscious son a deeper stab :  
Only my gentle Alice——her he loved——  
Her only ! till at last his heart grew strong  
As his frame weakened, and he longed once more  
To see the hall—'Twas speedy then—He lies  
Under yon yew tree. I have never left—  
I cannot leave——

*Re-enter ALICE.*

*Alice.*                      Mother!—Doth she not weep?—  
Ah me! that tears should sadden such an hour!—  
Mother! oh, smile upon me! I bring news  
Of joy.—He comes to-day—this very day—  
It is his birthday. I am come for flowers—  
Doth not Lord Claremont love them?

*Henry.*                                      Yes: but most  
The pure white rose.

*Alice.*                      Look how it blossoms here  
Amid the flaunting briar—the purest rose.  
We shall soon fill the basket.

*Mrs. Neville.*                      Claremont comes,  
The heir, to take his state, to fill the hall  
With revelry; and William—my poor boy!—  
Thou art Lord Claremont's friend—canst thou forgive  
A mother's tenderness?

*Henry.*                      Madam, each word  
Each patient tear of thine drew answering drops

From my sad heart. I knew, as Claremont knew,  
Imperfectly, the story of his race.

Oh ! it has made the grief of his young life,  
His splendid orphanage, to bear the weight  
Of wealth which should be yours—to feel your woe,  
To fear your hatred.

*Alice.*                      Hatred ! what, to him ?  
The kindest, noblest, best ! Hatred to him !  
And from my mother ! And 'tis thou his friend  
That talk'st so ! Chide him mother, But thou know'st  
not

Thou canst not know, how exquisitely one  
Claremont and goodness are. We were so poor  
Till Claremont succoured us ; a stripling then,  
And under a stern guardian's tutelage,  
He gave up every costly gaud of youth  
For us. Nay, that were little. He sought out  
Poor William in his distant school ; he wrote  
To me with such a graciousness ; he sent  
Gifts such as brothers to their sisters send—

Books, music, flowers : this pretty basket—see  
How like a bee-hive the bright straw is wrought—  
This basket came from him. And thou canst talk  
Of hatred !

*Henry.* Happiest ! happiest !

*Mrs. Neville.* She is right ;

The passing pang is o'er : I cannot grieve  
To see the noblest of a noble race  
Even in my husband's seat.

*Alice.* Would he were here !

Mother, shall we not know him ? I remember,  
Do I not mother, his dark curling hair,  
And his mild serious eyes and rosy cheeks,  
And how I used to love him !

*Mrs. Neville.* Wilt thou tell him

All this ?

*Alice.* Why should I not ? and yet sometimes  
I have a fluttering at my heart—an awe—  
A sinking.—Is it fear ?—'Twere wrong to fear  
Such goodness : yet, in sooth, I tremble, mother ;

I know not why. If he were gentle——like——  
If he would take my hand, and only say,  
Alice !

*Henry (taking her hand).* My cousin Alice ! Fly  
me not,

Alice !

*Alice.* Lord Claremont !

*Henry.* Nay, thy Henry, sweet one.

It was the first word that thou spakest, Alice ;  
Do not forget it now.——Forgive me, Madam,  
That I thus stole upon ye ! Oh, forgive  
My deeper but unwilling guilt ! At length  
I can be just. The old ancestral hall,  
The wide demesne, are thine. Within an hour  
Thy gentle William will be there to fill  
His father's seat—the heir. Oh, thank me not :  
I am still rich in my paternal wealth—  
A beggar still in love. I have no mother—  
Be thou one to me : let thy William call  
Me brother.

*Alice.* And poor Alice ?

*Henry.* 'Tis through her  
That I would claim that title.

*Mrs. Neville.* My dear son !





# HENRY TALBOT.

## A DRAMATIC SCENE.



They who are acquainted with the neighbourhood of Marlow, may perhaps recognise Seymour Court as the scene of this little drama. It is scarcely necessary to say that the characters and the story are altogether fictitious.

## CHARACTERS.

HENRY TALBOT.

SIR FRANCIS MORDAUNT.

ELEANOR, *Talbot's Sister.*

LOUISA, *his Ward.*

SCENE, *An elegant Drawing-room, with windows to the ground, opening on a Terrace, ornamented with roses, &c.*

## HENRY TALBOT.

---

ELEANOR and MORDAUNT *entering*.

*Eleanor.* Sir Francis Mordaunt, to a mournful house  
I bid you welcome! But you bring us comfort—  
His truest friend, his dearest! only you  
Would he rejoice to see. When I first heard  
Your late return from Italy, there rushed  
Over my heart a gladness, a strange feeling,  
That glowed like hope.

*Mordaunt.* This is a sad, sweet welcome.  
He is no better, then?

*Eleanor.* Oh, no!

*Mordaunt.* And what  
Is his disease?

*Eleanor.* A settled melancholy,  
That doth consume his body ; a decay  
Even at the noble heart.

**Mordaunt.** The cause ?

*Eleanor.* I know not.

*Mordaunt.* Oh, it must be some rooted malady  
That works thus in him ! Never can I join .  
Sadness and Henry Talbot. When we parted,  
One little year ago, I gazed on him  
As he stood on the sea beach, in all the pride  
Of youth and manly beauty, his bright glance  
Pursuing the swift vessel, and I thought,  
If ever happiness find rest on earth,  
She dwells in that fine form. High birth, high fortune,  
High talent, high pursuit, the general praise,  
The general love,—for his sweet graciousness  
Commanded hearts,—and, better still than this,  
Domestic bliss, affection, friendship, love,  
And such a power to feel and give delight ;  
Such deep humanity, such a fine sense



*Mordaunt.* Such love as thine would once have  
soothed all ills.

How long hath this change been.

*Eleanor.*

Oh, many months!

Ever since that summer evening on the Thames—  
That fatal August evening,—when their boat  
Upset, and Lionel Grey, his foster-brother,  
Was most unhappily drown'd. My brother, too,  
Striving in vain to save him, almost lost  
His life. He dived for the corse, and with the corse  
Was brought out motionless. A fever follow'd—  
A fever on the brain :—Oh the black horrors  
Of that long dream ! Those horrors passed away !  
But a dark cloud remains.

*Mordaunt.*

The consequence

Of a long fever. He must change the scene ;  
Must woo the sweet breath of the south ; must go  
To lovely Italy. I will return  
With him, with you.

*Eleanor.*

Nought can persuade him hence ;

And surely—(it is terrible to say,  
To think, to feel!)—too surely this disease  
Is of the mind, the heart. Something doth weigh—  
Thou art my brother's friend, and I to thee  
Speak as a brother—something—oh, it breaks  
My heart to think of it!

*Mordaunt.* I'd stake my life  
That he is blameless.

*Eleanor.* Just so have I felt  
A thousand times. But then he speaks wild words,  
And my wild fear—oh, free me from that fear,  
And I will worship thee! And comfort him,  
I do beseech thee, comfort him, whate'er—  
Do not desert him, even—I cannot speak :  
But love him ! Comfort him ! Forsake him not !

*Mordaunt.* Never. But his best comforters must be  
His sister—and one other. Dare I ask,  
Was there not one still dearer, whose true love,  
Whose faith, whose sympathy—I mean his ward,  
The lovely orphan, his betrothed bride.

*Eleanor.* Poor, poor Louisa ! Yes, she still is here.  
Poor, poor Louisa !

*Mordaunt.* Eighteen months have passed  
Since I last saw her. Never did I see  
A maid so sweet, so fair, so delicate,  
Or so devoted—living in his smiles,  
As the butterfly in the sunbeam. And so young,  
So made for peace and rest and happiness,  
As if she were herself some airy creature,  
Whom the first storm would shatter. Through this grief  
What hath sustained her ?

*Eleanor.* The deceiver, hope.  
She watches Henry's cheek, and if a flush  
Of the bright treacherous hectic chance to cross it,  
Then is she happy ; hangs upon his words ;  
And if one flash burst from the clouded spirit—  
One tone of the old love—poor, poor Louisa !  
Would that she were afraid ! When it does come,  
The stroke will kill her.

*Mordaunt.* Have you then no hope ?



*Eleanor.* Hark ! That's his step. Nay, do not rush  
to meet him ;

He cannot bear surprise.—Hark to that step,  
So slow, so feeble ! He is pausing now  
For breath. Alas ! alas ! is not that step  
The very knell of hope ?

*Enter TALBOT.*

Here is our friend,  
Brother !

*Mordaunt.* Dear Talbot !

*Talbot.* Mordaunt, this is kind—  
Too kind !

*Eleanor.* First let us place you on your couch ;  
Then will we join to thank this kindest friend  
For his kind visit. Henry, he is come  
To nurse you, to usurp my office, Henry.

*Mordaunt.* Rather to share it with you. Dearest  
Talbot,  
You must be well.

*Talbot.* Oh this is kind, too kind !

I am not worthy, I was never worthy  
Of such a friend. And now—oh go ! go ! go !  
Fly me !

*Mordaunt.* And wherefore ?

*Talbot.* Why, to have thee stay  
Would be a joy—and joy is not for me.  
Forgive me, Mordaunt ; I am sick and wayward—  
Sick at my soul—but it will soon be o'er.

*Eleanor.* I will not have thee talk so ; good my  
brother,

This is no gentle welcome—

*(Advancing towards the window with Mordaunt,  
and speaking to him apart.)*

For a while  
Seem not to observe him. This strong passion then  
Will pass away.

*Mordaunt.* Is't frequent ?

*Eleanor.* Yes. (*aloud*) Sir Francis,  
Your coming is well timed. Do you remember,

When you last honor'd us, 'twas at the close  
Of a most glorious autumn. Our beech woods  
Own'd every tint of gold, from deepest red  
To palest yellow. Often would you praise  
Their woodland beauty, and as often I  
With a proud boastful spirit bade you come  
And gaze on them in May, and see the sunbeams  
Wandering across them, with such wondrous charm  
Of light and shadow, bringing into life  
The unspeakable beauty of their fresh green tops.  
This is the very height and prime of May :—  
Said the proud boaster sooth ? Go to yon window—  
Look on the distant woods.

*Mordaunt.*

To me this view

Is always lovely ; loveliest as it is,  
Whate'er the season. This smooth sloping lawn,  
Sprinkled with odorous shrubs, suddenly sinking  
Into a steepness so abrupt ; the hills  
Sweeping away so finely ; and between,  
Deep in the bottom, the gay pretty town,

Mingled with trees and gardens ; the church spire  
Lifting its white and taper head amidst  
The woody heights that bound the various scene ;  
And underneath those woods, round that fair town,  
Between those hills, the ever-winding Thames—

*Talbot.* Ah !

*Mordaunt.* Glides, like a glittering snake,—

*Talbot.* Oh true ! true ! true !

*Mordaunt.* Coyly, by snatches, at rare intervals.

Seen, but diffusing a perpetual sense  
Of his bright presence—prince of streams !

*Talbot.* Oh fatal !

*Mordaunt (to Eleanor).* Alas ! is that the grief ?

*Talbot.* Oh fatal ! fatal !

Fatal as man's wild passions, as the worm  
That never dies ! The mirror where black thoughts  
And blacker deeds—What have I said ?

*Eleanor.* My Henry,

Art thou in pain ? Did'st call me ? Would'st thou aught ?  
No, did'st thou say ? Well, I will leave thee, Henry !

(*Apart to Mordaunt.*) Approach him not :—alone he  
will o’ermaster

The pang that shakes him. Make as though you heard  
Nought that he says. Talk on.

*Mordaunt.* My heart is full.

*Eleanor.* And mine—Oh God ! But I have learnt  
this sad

Hypocrisy, this necessary hardness.

See, he is calmer ! I beseech you, talk—

He listens—(*Aloud*). Then you grant that May is fair  
Even as October in our prospect here ?

*Mordaunt.* The picture is as bright. And yet I miss  
The autumnal beauty of this arching roof  
Of trellis, richly hung with clustering vines,  
Tendrils and leaves and fruit, a gorgeous frame  
For the fair picture. Sweet it was to gaze—  
And sweet it is. You look down on the world  
From this calm seat, as from her lofty nest  
The ring dove.

*Talbot.* Ay, it is an apt resemblance,

My own sweet sister bird.

*Eleanor.*                      Nay, dearest brother,  
My nest should be more lowly ; I would build  
On the ground, and look still upward. There's a farm  
Close by—oh we must show it you, Sir Francis—  
Which is almost my envy. And it is  
The prettiest walk ! Through a beech-wood the path,  
A wild, rude copse-road, winds, beneath the light  
And feathery stems of the young trees, so fresh .  
In their new delicate green, and so contrasting  
With their slim, flexile forms, that almost seem  
To bend as the wind passes, with the firm  
Deep-rooted vigor of those older trees,  
And nobler,—those grey giants of the woods,  
That stir not at the tempest. Oh ! that path  
Is pleasant, with its beds of richest moss,  
And tufts of fairest flowers, fragrant woodroof  
So silver white, wood-sorrel elegant,  
Or light anemone. A pleasant path  
Is that ; with such a sense of freshness round us,

Of cool and lovely light ; the very air  
Has the hue of the young leaves. Downward the road  
Winds till beneath a beech, whose slender stem  
Seems toss'd across the path, all suddenly  
The close wood ceases, and a steep descent  
Leads to a valley, whose opposing side  
Is crown'd with answering woods ; a narrow valley  
Of richest meadow land, which creeps half up  
The opposite hill ; and in the midst a farm,  
With its old ample orchard, now one flush  
Of fragrant bloom ; and just beneath the wood,  
Close by the house, a rude deserted chalk-pit,  
Half full of rank and creeping plants, with briars  
And pendent roots of trees half covered o'er,  
Like some wild shaggy ruin. Beautiful  
To me is that lone farm. There is a peace,  
A deep repose, a silent harmony  
Of nature and of man. The circling woods  
Shut out all human eyes ; and the gay orchard  
Spreads its sweet world of blossoms, all unseen,

Save by the smiling sky. That were a spot  
To live and die in.

*Mordaunt.* Beautiful it must be ;  
But fancy makes the charms she tells, as the sunbeams,  
Tenderly wandering o'er those distant woods,  
Bring out their exquisite tints.

*Eleanor.* Nay, if you doubt—  
Brother, the sun and air to-day are join'd  
In a rare compact ; 'tis the warmth of June,  
With April's balmy breath. Come forth, dear Henry !  
We'll put my poney in the garden-chair,  
And soon convert this unbeliever. Come !  
It will revive you. Let us lead him thither.  
You will enjoy this air.

*Talbot.* I am not worthy  
To breathe it, Eleanor. That innocent joy  
Belongs to the innocent.

*Eleanor.* Nay, you must come.  
I'll call Louisa, and prepare the chaise.  
You will not fail us, Henry ? *[Exit ELEANOR.]*



*Mordaunt.*

Beautiful

Is sisterly love ; divinely beautiful  
In yonder noble maid. How firm, how gentle,  
How like the purity of some old marble  
Is she in form and mind ! Even her young beauty,  
The very language of her lofty brow,  
Is queen-like, till she bends to speak to thee,  
With such affectionate softness, and a look  
So touchingly sweet. Alas ! I have no sister.  
How blest ye are together !

*Talbot.*

Blest we were ;

But now—the word is mockery ; yet we were  
Once blest. You know that we were twins and orphans  
Alone in the wide world, and all the world  
To one another. I so proud of her !  
And she so fond of me !

*Mordaunt.*

You still so proud ;

She still so fond.

*Talbot.*

Ay ; but the joy is gone,

Once we were call'd alike : look on me now,

And look on her. A red and withering hand  
Hath past over my youth, and turn'd my blood  
To fire. Her care, her grief, her misery,

Am I. 'Twill soon be past.

*Mordaunt.* Nay, you must live  
For that twin sister's sake ; to pay her care ;  
To bless her love.

*Talbot.* I have no right to love ;  
I am infected. That which was my bliss  
Is now my punishment. I have no right  
To kindness, hers or yours ; or that of one  
Whose deeper tenderness doth pierce my heart  
As with a dagger. One so patiently,  
So exquisitely true ; so trusting, yet  
So fearful ; all made up of the fond hope  
That trembling sits and smiles. What agony  
To look upon that smile, and watch that hope,  
And know how false, how hollow ! I've deserved  
Even that bitterest drop.

*Mordaunt.* This is, indeed,

A sickness of the soul. Henry, we two  
Have been, from boy to youth, from youth to man,  
Friends ; not of such as borrow friendship's name  
To gild the flimsy band that knits gay striplings  
In light companionship, or the politic league  
Of subtle selfish man ; but friends of the old  
Heroic cast, such as forbear, and bear,  
And serve, and love, and die, and trust their lives  
To the proved faith of friendship.

*Talbot.*

Such we were,

And if a spirit so fallen—

*Mordaunt.*

Such we are ;

And being such, I do conjure thee, Henry,  
By that old friendship, by the gushing tears  
Which fill'd our eyes at meeting, by the love  
Which even now is working in our breasts,  
Confide in me. Disclose the fatal secret  
Which weighs upon your soul.

*Talbot.*

What ! cast the shade

Of guilt on thy white honour ? Tell to thee,

To thee that deadly.—Never! never! never!  
Here let it die!—Here! here! Even though it swell  
My heart to bursting.

*Mordaunt.* Henry, you are ill;  
And your sick fancy in the wayward mood,  
Turns error into crime. A purer mind,  
A nobler heart, and, set aside the rare  
And momentary flash of sudden wrath,  
A kinder temper——

*Talbot.* Momentary! Ay,  
So is the thunderbolt.

*Mordaunt.* I do implore,  
Even as I would sue for present life,  
Brood not upon this tale. Or tell it me,  
Or chase it from thy memory.

*Talbot.* Listen, then,  
Since thou wilt share the load,—since thou wilt wrest  
The murderer's story, listen!

*Mordaunt.* Murderer!

*Talbot.* Why, I have said it. Didst thou think that I

Was dying for some trivial larceny—  
Some poor man's common crime ? Sir, thou shalt find  
I am a braver villain !

*Mordaunt.*      Talk not thus.

I pray you, talk not thus.    Be calm ! Be calm !

*Talbot.*    And he would still a breaking heart with  
words,

As Canute talk'd—He weeps ! Forgive me, friend !  
Truest and best, and dearest, pardon me !  
For I am near bestraught with misery,  
And know not what I say.    Forgive me, Mordaunt,  
And listen.    Didst thou e'er——First reach that water,  
And sit down here by me ; for I must speak  
Names that will shake my very soul, and then  
The voice may falter.    Interrupt me not ;  
For I have now a passing hour of strength,  
A gleam of parting light, and I would fain  
Pour into thy kind bosom my remorse,  
My agony.    So ! Did you ever see  
Lionel Grey ?

*Mordaunt.* Never.

*Talbot.* Nor his dear mother,  
The widow Grey ?

*Mordaunt.* Your nurse ? That kindest woman !  
Often.

*Talbot.* She was, indeed, the kindest woman,  
The simplest, gentlest, sweetest-spirited woman  
That ever trod the earth ;—my foster-mother,  
Who look'd around on all her little world  
With the indulgent softness that she felt  
For the infant at her breast ; for me, whom most  
She loved ; for me, who most loved her ; my refuge  
In every childish grief, the joyful sharer  
Of every childish joy ! Oh how I loved  
That dear and smiling face, made beautiful  
By the warm heart, and the soft pleasant voice  
That never spake but true and gentle words !  
That never——She is dead ! And I—nay, fear not—  
This pang will pass away. She had a son,  
An only child ;—the milk which nourish'd me

Was stolen from him.—Poor Lionel ! so soon  
Did I——He was a lovely youth ; most richly  
Deck'd with all lighter graces, music, painting,  
And poesy ; and, as he grew to manhood,  
His talent grew finer and stronger. Proud  
Was his dear mother of his pretty songs,  
When Ellen Talbot sang them.

*Mordaunt.*

I have heard her.

A queen might have been proud had such lips sung  
The lays of her king-son.

*Talbot.*

Poor Lionel

Was with us long and often. In our house  
And in our hearts he held a brother's place,  
Till he at length forgot the unequal rank  
Which we would not remember. Rash and vain,  
And most presumptuous in his love !—Alas !  
And dare I blame him ?—I !—My sister saw  
His passion for Louisa, and she strove  
To check his hopes ; but I saw nought, till all  
Fatally—fatally——It was a day

Of sultry August, Lionel and I  
At sunset sought the river, and embarked  
Alone upon the waters. Oh how calm,  
How beautiful they were ! How made for peace !  
The golden clouds shone into them ; and there  
The soft and bright blue sky, fringed in by trees.  
My soul was lapp'd in the calm loveliness,  
The balmy silence. When, all suddenly,  
Lionel, heated as I think by wine,  
Demanded my Louisa's hand. . Louisa !  
Mine own affianced bride ! I told him this  
Calmly and soothingly ; and he replied  
That I might force her hand, but that her heart  
Was his. Then the strong frenzy mastered me,  
And with the oar I dashed him overboard,  
Stunn'd, stupefied ! I too stood motionless,  
Stunn'd, stupefied, till I saw the drowning wretch  
Rise on the waters. Then the sense returned ;  
The fear, the hope, the breathless agony,  
The desperate struggle. How I toiled to save





Could wash out blood, no day hath passed but I  
Have thus embalmed his memory ! Grievously  
Have I been punished ; here, in my heart's core ;  
In undeserved respect ; in praise ; in love ;  
In poor Louisa ; in my noble sister ;  
In all the tears I cause. All lovely things  
Combine to punish me ; the golden evening,  
The sunny waters, and the calm blue sky,  
They are my scourges ! Oh the agony  
That I have felt at kindness ! Most at hers,  
The mother's. After that most wretched night,  
My mind and body sank, alike subdued,  
For many weeks. A merciful pause it was  
Of misery ! I woke again to suffer,  
And the first person by my couch was she  
In her deep mourning habit ; her pale face  
Covered with tears, yet trying for a smile ;  
And that voice, once so pleasant, low and hoarse,  
Yet striving still, in sweet and gentle words,  
To speak of love, and care, and gratitude

To me—Great God! to me!—for all I dared  
To save her son! She thanked me, and she blessed me!  
She blessed me! Never curse struck to the soul  
Like that kind woman's blessing!

*Mordaunt.*

And she died?

*Talbot.* She died. For many weeks I watched her  
bed,

And then I closed her eyes, and followed her,  
And saw her laid by him! That was my death-stroke.  
Then, when the earth fell cold on both my victims,  
My doom was sealed.

*Mordaunt.* Oh say not so, dear Henry!

Live for us all. For poor Louisa, live!—

For thy own Eleanor!—for me!

*Talbot.*

My heart

Is lighter. When I die, if Eleanor  
Should grieve, as well I think she will, oh! tell her  
My story; she will then be comforted  
That I am in my grave. Poor, poor Louisa!  
When the oak falls, the ivy dies with it;

And she——But I am better, lighter, easier  
In body and in soul. There is no balm  
So healing as a good man's pity.

*Mordaunt.*

Say

His love, his deep respect. Thou hast well practised  
The painfullest and noblest of all virtues—  
Repentance. Comfort thee! Look forward, onward :  
Think in thy being how much happiness  
Is lapt.

*Talbot.* Oh, my true friend! Hark! She comes here!  
I know her tread afar,—her nymph-like tread,  
So light and quick. The graceful greyhound scarce  
Can match her graceful speed.

*Enter ELEANOR and LOUISA.*

*Louisa.*

Sir Francis, welcome!

This is indeed a happiness.—How well  
He looks! How much revived!

*Eleanor.*

His face is flushed;

But that—

*Louisa.* Look at his eye ! and see ! see ! see !  
He smiles again ! Oh blessings on his head  
Whose coming caused that smile !

*Mordaunt.* Why such a blessing  
Might draw a man from Afric.

*Louisa.* I could chide him  
That he did not come sooner, the dear friend,  
Bringer of health and comfort.

*Talbot.* My Louisa,  
I do begin to hope.

*Louisa.* Oh blessed sound !

*Talbot.* When shall we forth into the woods, fair  
Ellen ?

*Eleanor.* First, dearest brother, rest awhile. The sun  
Is overcast. Wait till the clouds disperse.  
Rest thee. Ay, so. Now, shall I read to thee ?

*Talbot.* No. All this day, an old and favourite  
strain  
Hath echoed in mine ear. Wilt thou not sing it  
For me, Louisa ?

*Louisa.* Yes! oh yes!

*Eleanor.* But listening

To her sweet voice is not repose.

*Mordaunt.* What then?

*Eleanor.* Pleasure, exciting, searching, rapturous  
pleasure!

Yet sing to him, Louisa! See how pale,

How shivering—Henry, thou art ill again?

*Talbot.* No; 'twill pass off. Dearest and kindest  
sister,

Believe, 'twill pass away. Now sing.

*Louisa.* What song?

*Talbot.* That which is ringing in mine ears. The  
strain,

Which, by the old tradition of our house,

Was wont to usher in the nuptial morn

Of all the Talbots—which I used to call

Our bridal song, Louisa. I would fain

Hear that song once again.

*Louisa.* Not that! not that!

*Eleanor.* Yes. 'Tis a pleasant and a ringing air,  
And suits thee well ; thy springy form, thy voice,  
Young, lively, clear, thy blushing smile. Thou seem'st  
At once the quaint musician, the light nymph,  
Strewer of flowers, and the fair bride. Sing ! Sing !  
Let's hear that pleasant strain.—Still paler !—Sing !

*Louisa sings.*

Forth the lovely bride ye bring :  
Gayest flowers before her fling,  
From your high-piled baskets spread,  
Maidens of the fairy tread !  
Strew them far, and wide, and high  
A rosy shower 'twixt earth and sky !  
Strew about ! Strew about \* !  
Bright jonquil, in golden pride,  
Fair carnation, freak'd and dyed,  
Strew about ! Strew about !

\* For the burthen of this song " Strew about ! Strew about ! " I am indebted to a song in Thomas Campion's " Memorable Masque."

Dark-eyed pinks, with fringes light,

Rich geraniums, clustering bright,

Strew about ! Strew about !

Flaunting pea, and harebell blue,

And damask-rose of deepest hue,

And purest lilies, maidens, strew !

Strew about ! Strew about !

Home the lovely bride ye bring :

Choicest flowers before her fling,

Till dizzying steams of rich perfume

Fill the lofty banquet-room !

Strew the tender citron there,

The crushed magnolia proud and rare,

Strew about ! Strew about !

Orange blossoms, newly dropp'd,

Chains from high acacia cropp'd,

Strew about ! Strew about !

Pale musk-rose, so light and fine,

Cloves, and stars of jessamine,

Strew about ! Strew about !



Tops of myrtle, wet with dew,  
Nipp'd where the leaflets sprout anew,  
Fragrant bay-leaves, maidens, strew !  
Strew about !——

*Eleanor.* Oh help ! he faints ! Help ! help ! His  
breath is gone.

*Mordaunt.* Alas ! alas ! he ne'er——I cannot find  
A pulse——alas ! he's dead !

*Louisa.* Dead ! dare not say it !  
'Tis but a swoon. He's better. He'll be well.  
Did he not say so,—he whose voice was truth ?  
And dost thou dare—Oh rouse thee, my own Henry,  
And I will sing to thee——

*Eleanor.* Oh hush ! hush ! hush !

*Louisa.* Will sing to thee the song thou lov'st so well.

(*Sings*) Pale musk-rose so light and fine,  
Cloves, and stars of jessamine—

*Eleanor.* Cease ! cease ! Oh this is horrible ! Weep !  
Weep !

Weep for thy Henry ! He is gone ! the kindest,  
The tenderest, the best !—Her brain is wandering.

*Louisa (sings).* Home the lovely bride ye bring—  
I cannot sing. I have no breath. I tremble  
At my own voice. And he—he listens not.  
Henry ! He hears me not. He's dead ! he's dead !  
Eleanor, he is dead !

*Eleanor.* She, too, will die ;  
That other dearest thing ! And I alone,  
And desolate—

*Mordaunt.* No Ellen, not alone !

*Eleanor.* Oh tell me, thou his friend, what load of  
grief—

*Mordaunt.* He died a penitent.

*Eleanor.* For that, thank Heaven !  
All else may be endured. My kindest brother !  
My tenderest ! my best ! Farewell ! Farewell !

# **THE SIEGE.**

**A DRAMATIC SCENE.**

## CHARACTERS.

BIANCA, *Duchess of Mantua.*

CLAUDIA, *her young maid of honour.*

COUNT D'OSMA, *her general.*

COUNTESS D'OSMA, *his wife.*

ORLANDO, *an officer.*

MELZI, *a chamberlain.*

ANTONIO, *a dumb page.*

SCENE, *The palace at Mantua.*

## THE SIEGE.

---

DUCHESS, CLAUDIA, MELZI.

*Duchess.* Now my good chamberlain, I prythee send  
And tell the governor at six this evening  
We will attend the council. Hark ye, Sir !  
Keep the door close. Let no one enter here,  
Soldier or statesman. 'Tis a day of truce ;  
For once the weary echoes sleep in peace  
Unroused by the loud cannonry ; I too  
Would fain for once be quiet. [*Exit MELZI.*

Claudia mine,

Sit down and talk to me, and comfort me,  
My little faithful girl.

*Claudia.* Ah ! dearest lady !

I would I were a man to fight for thee,  
And kill this terrible cousin !

*Duchess.* Out upon thee !

Thou kill a man, my pretty ladybird,  
My blossom of fourteen ! I did not think  
That thou hadst been so fond of fighting, Claudia ;  
I've seen thee quake and shiver and turn pale—  
Ay, as myself—at many a bloody sight  
And warlike sound this siege has forced upon us.

*Claudia.* But if I were a man—and even now,  
Poor coward as she is, for her dear mistress  
Would Claudia die.

*Duchess.* That were no kindly service  
To thy poor loving mistress ! Rather wish  
That thou and I, remote from all this coil,  
Two cottage maidens, on some pleasant hill  
Dwelt peacefully. Claudia, should'st thou not like  
To sit at evening, working in the porch,  
Watching the sunset, whilst the vine-wreathed elms

Were richly gilded by his upward beams ;  
And thou would'st tell a hundred merry tales,  
And I should sing sweet snatches of old songs,  
The songs thou lov'st so well.

*Claudia.* Oh ! we should be  
As blithe as two young birds !

*Duchess.* Such joy may come ;  
But there will be much tumult and unrest  
Before that blessed hour. Ah ! woe is me  
That ever I was born a princess, Claudia !

*Claudia.* That ever the ambitious prince Lorenzo  
Was born to claim your rightful crown !

*Duchess.* To win !  
Nay start not, Claudia ; I have not a hope  
Remaining. Here we are, shut up in Mantua,—  
Mantua, which nought can save but speedy succour ;—  
And where to look for aid !—All my allies  
Weak, wavering, treacherous, to my fortunate cousin  
Inclining, as the sunflower to the sun ;  
My valiant general wounded and a prisoner :

And she, his wife, whose prompt and active spirit  
Was well worth my whole council-board, she too  
A voluntary captive.

*Claudia.*           The dear countess!

How much we miss her quick and cheerful look,  
Her frank and pleasant speech! Yet she was right  
To tend her husband's couch;—was she not right?

*Duchess.*   Oh! yes.

*Claudia.*       And she will soon be back. I dreamt  
Last night that she was here, and the lord cardinal  
Your wisest uncle, and another lord,  
—But not a cardinal,—so noble-looking,  
So lovely, yet so grand—and he and you—  
I must not tell your highness what I dreamt,  
But I will wager that the cardinal  
Will speedily be here.

*Duchess.*           Now Heaven forefend!  
That wise lord cardinal, as thou call'st him, girl,  
He is my grief of griefs. I have a letter  
Of that wise lord's inditing.



*Enter MELZI.*

How now, Sir!

Did we not say we would be private?

*Melzi.*

Madam,

The Countess D'Oasma.

[*Exit.*

*Enter COUNTESS D'OSMA and ORLANDO.*

*Duchess.*

Laura! my own Laura!

Thou comest at a wish. Claudia and I

Were talking of thee.

*Claudia.*

Nay, I dreamt of her—

*Countess.* And be it for good or evil, Claudia's  
dreams

Do still come true—say'st thou not so, my sweet one?

How the dear child clings to me! Let me pay

My love and duty here;—my royal mistress!

My dearest friend!

*Duchess.*

I ask not for my general;

To see thee here and smiling, is to know,

That he is better.

*Countess.* Better ; but still weak.

*Duchess.* And may we hope to see him ? Will they  
hear

Of ransom ? Claudia here would pawn her jewels,  
And so would I, even to my very crown,  
Could we so purchase that bold faithful friend,  
Whose presence was protection.

*Claudia.* That we would.

Shall I go fetch them ?

*Countess.* My sweet simpleton,  
There is no need. I have not words to thank you,—  
But the fair duchess will regain her servant,  
Claudia her merry friend, without the loss  
Of one the smallest of those seedling pearls  
That fringe the royal mantle. He will soon  
Be here. This young and valiant gentleman,  
To whom he hath been an honor'd prisoner,  
I a most cherish'd and most grateful guest,  
Will tell you on what terms.

*Duchess.* He brings with him

A welcome in your praises. Gentle Sir,  
What are these terms ? Your prince can scarcely ask  
That which we should refuse. What must we give  
For our great captain's freedom ?

*Orlando.*

Gracious Madam,

I am commanded to deliver him  
Without exchange or ransom. He is now  
With a small escort at the city gate ;  
He would remain there—a most needless form—  
Till I returned ;—a vain and needless form,  
But one, which well becomes the stainless honor  
Of that bright ornament of chivalry  
Count D'Osma.

*Duchess.* Without ransom or exchange ?

*Orlando.* Without exchange or ransom—free as air.  
The prince Lorenzo would not for those worlds  
Which roll unnumbered in the midnight heaven,  
By staking it 'gainst one of smaller note,  
Degrade your general's old and noble name ;  
But he being free, I have a grace to crave

Of your free bounty. You have here, fair duchess,  
A prisoner, whom my master fain would ransom  
With aught that he——

*Duchess.*                      Talk not of ransom, Sir !  
Take him. I am too happy to repay  
Some slender part of this amazing debt  
Of courtesy and kindness to your prince.  
I knew not we had any prisoner  
Of note enough for ransom. Yesternight  
Some soldiers were brought in ; and a young boy  
Dumb as they thought——

*Orlando.*                      Deaf from his birth and mute.  
That is the boy,—Lorenzo's favourite page.

*Duchess.* His page ! That poor mute boy Lorenzo's  
page,  
The bold and fortunate soldier, who, men say,  
Is rough as winds in March ! What can he do  
With such a helpless innocent ?

*Orlando.*                      As the winds  
Of March do with the violet, lap it round,

*Orlando.* A lovely boy—fair, slender, delicate,  
Almost as that young maid ; with curling hair  
Of such a brown as is the unsunned side

Of the ripe hazel nut ; a ready smile  
Instinct with meaning ; a quick varying blush,  
Which is his prettier speech ; a large blue eye  
Tenderly watching those whom best he loves,  
And giving back their looks, as the clear lake  
Reflects its shores.

*Duchess.*            To thee, too, he was dear ?

*Orlando.* Oh ! very dear. So innocent, so helpless,  
So made for love and pity ! He was a sort  
Of living gentleness, and gentle thoughts  
Came with his presence. In the rough rude camp  
That peaceful spirit seemed a type of peace,  
As a small bit, no bigger than my hand,  
Of the exquisite blue sky, looks out and smiles  
From the dark stormy Heaven. For this we loved  
him.

*Duchess.* For this you loved him,—that I well  
believe ;

But surely, Sir, the bold ambitious soldier,  
His warlike master, loved him not for this ?

*Orlando.* I cannot read men's hearts ; but surely,  
Madam,  
I think he did.

*Duchess.* Can he love any thing ?

*Orlando.* He must be made of stubborn stuff indeed,  
That did not give some kindness to that kind  
Affectionate boy. The most unloving heart  
That ever froze within a coat of mail  
Must have loved him. His pretty flattery,  
Unlike all other flatteries ; his apt  
And constant service ; and the stronger tie  
Of his entire dependence ; his so fond  
And firm reliance—speak, fair Countess D'Oasma,  
Did not Lorenzo love him ?

*Countess.* I am sure  
He loved him, Sir ; as fondly as yourself.

*Enter CLAUDIA.*

*Duchess.* Well, Claudia ?

*Claudia.* They have sent to seek him, Madam

*Duchess.* How came he taken ?

*Orlando.* He's a painter born,  
And, as we guess, caught by some lovelier scene,  
Some bright effect of sunshine or of shade,  
Ventured too near the walls. He is absorbed  
In his delightful art ; beauty to him  
Is as a real goddess. Poor Antonio !  
How richly will his short captivity  
Be paid when he shall see——Did you not say  
You had no picture ? that she had refused ?  
Dear countess, I will beg for you the next  
Hebe or Flora that Antonio paints,  
And that will be her portrait.

*Countess.* Fail me not.

*Orlando.* Have I your highness' leave to seek the gates,  
And bring Count D'Osma hither ? I fear for him  
This long exposure to the noon-day sun.  
He will be better here. May I not say  
'Tis your command ? He must obey me then.

*Duchess.* It is my wish. By that time young Antonio



Will be prepared to meet you. I would offer  
An hostage for your safety, but I see  
You doubt us not ;—the generous and the brave,  
They know not what doubt means.—One of my chamber,  
Attend this gentleman !—You will return  
In half an hour ?

*Orlando.* In a less space, fair duchess,  
I trust to bring my captive to your feet.

*Countess.* Now is your wager won ?

*Orlando.* Lost. I have lost  
Two hearts. [*Exit.*

*Claudia.* Oh what a gallant gentleman !  
How noble and how stately, yet how gentle !  
What a fine frankness, mix'd with deep respect  
And winning courtesy ! What piercing eyes—  
Such sudden laughter in them when he glanced  
Up at the countess ! What a gracious smile !  
And then his voice—so sweet, so very kind,  
As if he loved all that he talked about ;—  
Oh he's the very creature of my dream !

*Countess.* Thy dream again ! What was it, mistress mine ?

Was he to wed thee ?

*Claudia.* Me ! Oh no ! Wed me !

No, no : not me. Cannot you guess ? Wed me !

*Duchess.* Peace, dearest prattler ! Tell me, my own Laura,

The story of thy absence : tell me all,  
All that befell thee in that hostile camp.  
But first——What is he called ?

*Countess.* Who call'd ?

*Duchess.* The youth  
That left us even now. Is he of rank ?

*Countess.* High born, not wealthy ; of the younger  
branch

Of an illustrious house ; a gallant soldier,  
High in your cousin's councils and the love  
Of his brave army, is our kind Orlando.

*Claudia.* Orlando ! What a pretty knightly name !

*Duchess.* Claudia, be still. Now, countess, for thy tale.

*Countess.* 'Tis summ'd up in two words. In yonder camp,

Our hatred and our fear, nothing I found  
But noble kindness ; I have brought away  
Nothing but gratitude. He is so great,  
So good !

*Duchess.* Orlando ?

*Countess.* Ay, and Prince Lorenzo.  
You know what fear possess'd me when I sought  
My husband, dead or living ; in that fear,  
Growing upon me even to senselessness,  
I reach'd the camp, and fainted. I revived  
To hear a well-known voice call upon Laura,  
His own dear Laura, and I found myself  
Supported on a kind and manly breast,  
Beside my husband's couch.

*Duchess.* Orlando's ?

*Countess.* Yes.

We were his prisoners,—no—his honor'd guests,  
For so he loved to call us ; and as guests

Beloved and honor'd we have dwelt with him  
Even till this hour. Never was sympathy  
So touching and so true. He shared my watch  
Throughout the weary night, as soothingly  
As mothers tend a sickly babe ! he cheer'd  
The painful day with reading and with converse,  
And hopeful happy smiles. He and Antonio,  
The sweet mute page, they were to me, Bianca,  
Another dear Bianca and her Claudia.  
Can I say more ? Is not this gentleness  
Rare in a soldier ? Then the peaceful tastes  
That dwell so strangely in that warlike tent,  
Flute and guitar, and books in many tongues,  
And drawings above all, free, masterly,  
Even as his dear Antonio's. Not a map  
Or soldier's plan but on some vacant edge  
Betray'd the artist's hand.

*Claudia.*

Oh what a man !

*Countess.* Has my sweet duchess then no news for  
me ?

Has she not letters from the cardinal ?

*Duchess.* Such as I blush to show thee. He would  
have me—

Me born a princess !—He would have me, Laura,  
Me trained by thee in whitest modesty  
And delicate reserve !—He would have me  
Cast off all maiden pride, all womanly shame,  
And seek, invite, and win, if win I may,  
This young Lorenzo. I would sooner die.

*Countess.* I would not have thee seek him, my  
Bianca,

And yet——

*Duchess.* Yet what ?

*Countess.* I wish thou wast his wife.

*Duchess.* His wife ! That fierce rough man my  
enemy—

His wife !

*Countess.* Thou art mistaken in him, dearest !—  
Mantua must fall.

*Duchess.* Why I can live unduchess'd.

Claudia and I were planning out to-day

A happy cottage life—

*Countess.* Pooh ! pooh !

*Duchess.* Or thou

May'st give us shelter.

*Countess.* Never doubt of that.

*Duchess.* Yet it might injure thee with the new  
duke

(How strange that title sounds !) to harbour me.

No ! a pale nun within some lowly cell,

I may defy life's changes. Thou wilt go

With me, my Claudia ? Oh, I still must have

Something to love !—the strong necessity

Of woman's heart. Thou wilt go with me, dearest ?

*Claudia.* Ay, to the end of the world. But my own  
duchess

Will never be a nun. A happier fate

Is hers. She will find some one better worth

Her love than poor, poor Claudia—will she not ?

A different love !

*Duchess.* My little faithful girl,  
We'll to a nunnery. *Countess*—I know not  
Why I should ask the question—What was that  
Signor Orlando gave thee as ye parted ?

*Countess.* A trifling toy.

*Duchess.* Did I not hear him say—  
I scarce could catch the words—What was the toy ?

*Countess.* A heart-shaped brooch of ruby, set with  
pearls.

See, here.

*Claudia.* The pretty trinket ! And he gave thee  
This for a keep-sake ?

*Countess.* No. I won it of him  
In a fair wager.

*Claudia.* About what ? Do tell !

*Countess.* We two were talking gravely yesternight  
Of beauty of complexion. He preferred  
Corregio's bright-haired angels, fair as light,  
Soft as a summer cloud. I love, you know,  
The lovely brown ; and much I talked of eyes

Shining through long dark lashes ; clustering curls  
As dark as they, adorning and contrasting  
The ivory forehead ; much of dimpled cheeks  
Coloured like damask roses, and of lips  
Like parted coral ; till at last I wagered  
That ere another sunset he should own  
Himself my convert. He has lost his stake,  
As ye perceive.

*Duchess.* And Claudia's glossy hair  
Is pale as undyed silk !

*Claudia.* He's here again.

*Enter* COUNT D'OSMA, supported by ORLANDO and

MELZI.

*Duchess.* My gallant general, my faithful friend,  
Welcome !—How weak you are ! Lie on this couch.  
Yes, Claudia, that is right—shake up the cushions.  
So ! so ! Lie down.

*Count D'Osmā.* My sweet and gentle mistress,  
This graciousness——



*Duchess.* Hush ! hush ! Go to him, Laura.  
My Claudia, thy caresses overpower him.  
How pale he is ! how faint !—And I the cause  
Of all this misery !—Melzi, come to me.

*Claudia.* Alas ! how much he suffers ! Think you, Sir,  
He will be well again ?

*Orlando.* Oh, doubt it not !  
This painful languor springs from loss of blood ;  
From this his first exertion ; most of all  
From the deep joy to be again at home,  
To meet his royal mistress, and to feel  
Her touching tenderness.

*Melzi.* The crown and keys ?

*Duchess.* Yes—yes. [Exit Melzi.]

Signor Orlando, we expect  
The mute page instantly.

*Orlando.* I can but bless  
His absence, gracious lady.

*Duchess.* Once again  
Accept my thanks. Countess, I see we still

Must want our general; he is too weak  
To venture forth to battle.

*Count d'Osmá.*                      Strong enough  
To fight for you, die for you. But, alas!  
The sacrifice were vain. There is no hope.  
The strength of yonder army, and the skill  
Of its brave leader, and the gathering numbers  
Of bold allies that flock on every side;—  
And we so few!——

*Orlando.*                      I ought not to hear this.

*Duchess.* Yes, most of all you ought.      *Signo*

Orlando,

You are a generous enemy,—a friend;—  
I cannot call him less to whom I owe  
Count d'Osmá—and as friend or enemy  
Hear me! I will no longer sacrifice  
My faithful subjects in this wasting war.  
My cousin, howsoe'er we have been trained  
To hate each other, is a gallant prince,  
Wise, valiant, fortunate, and fitter far

To reign in Mantua than I, a woman,  
A timorous, friendless, most defenceless woman !  
*Re-enter Melzi, with the crown, which he gives to the  
Duchess, and goes out.*

Bear thou to prince Lorenzo, to the Duke  
Of Mantua, this crown, the honoured crown  
Of our brave ancestors ; no braver man  
E'er wreathed his hard-won laurels with the gems  
That star its golden circlet. With it bear  
The city keys. Conjure him to forgive  
My bold defenders ; their fidelity  
To me is the best pledge of loyalty  
To their new master. Oh be they forgiven !  
For me, I only ask to pass unharmed  
As far as Naples.—Grieve not, my good Lord ;  
Claudia and I shall be as happy there  
As two young linnets freshly let abroad  
From a fine gilded cage.—Nay, take the crown.

*Orlando.* Duchess !—

*Duchess.* I am no duchess. To that title

I'll never answer more. Signor Orlando,  
I am Bianca di Gonzaga now ;  
I prythee call me so ;—and take this crown.

*Orlando.* Not yet; not yet. Fair Countess, hast  
thou said

Lorenzo's message ?

*Countess.* No. My own Bianca,  
Thou hast done rightly, wisely ; but this prince,  
This duke—no matter how, or when, or where—  
Hath seen and loves thee, and will little prize  
Thy crown without thyself.

*Duchess.* It cannot be.

*Countess.* 'Tis so.

*Duchess.* And if it were, could I love him  
So long my foe, and now and evermore  
A rude blunt soldier ? I am no Hippolita,  
To be conquered into love.

*Countess.* Thou know'st him not.  
Truly thou said'st that ye have both been trained  
In hatred. He thought thee, my trembling fawn,

A youthful Amazon ;—he's wiser now ;—  
And thou, when thou shalt know him, wilt confess  
Thou too hast been mistaken. D'Oasma, say,  
Is not the prince most amiable ?

*Count d'Oasma.*

A hero.—

*Duchess.* Why there it is ! I hate the very sound—  
A hero ! A mere fighter ! whose one virtue  
Is o'ertopped by the lion. Pardon me,  
My valiant friends ; I do beseech you, pardon !  
You may, for heroes though ye be, you still  
Are something more. It chafes my very soul  
To hear all manly qualities comprized  
In that brute instinct, courage. If I wed,  
It shall be one who joins to a bold spirit  
A kind and tender heart ; one who can love  
All gentle things, books, music, nature, art ;  
One who——But I shall never wed ! I pray you,  
Good signor, take the crown. Where is this page ?

*Countess.* All that thou hast described is prince  
Lorenzo ;—

Will not his friend plead for him ?

*Orlando.*

On my knees

I do entreat his fair obdurate cousin

To hear him plead himself. Admit him once !

*Duchess.* Thou too !—My Claudia, we will to a  
nunnery ;—

Thou wilt go with me ?

*Claudia.*

To the death. How strange

And sad this is ! my dream was different.

*Enter Melzi and Antonio.*

*Melzi.* Madam, the page.

*Duchess.*

We'll to a nunnery.

*Claudia.* Look there, look there, dear duchess ! see  
he kneels

Low at his master's feet !

*Duchess.*

We'll to a nunnery.

*Claudia.* Nay, but look at him ; he's so beautiful ;—  
He's risen now. And look ! look ! look ! dear duchess !  
The poor rejected crown,—look, he has placed it

Upon Orlando's head. How it becomes him !—

How like a prince he looks !—Like ! 'Tis the prince !

The prince himself !

*Countess.* Dear ardent girl, it is.

*Orlando.* Canst thou forgive me, cousin ? loveliest  
cousin,

And most beloved !—Say, canst thou pardon me ?

There is thy crown, Bianca ! Thou art still

The Duchess ! None but thou shall reign in Mantua.

The sceptre is a bauble ; my ambition

Soars higher ; I would call the hand that sways it

My own, my very own. Speak, most beloved !

My lovely cousin, speak !

*Duchess.* Is all this real ?

Art thou Lorenzo ? And dost thou indeed——?

Do not deceive me.

*Orlando.* Never, sweet, again,  
So help me love !

*Claudia.* Now is not Claudia's dream  
The very truth ? You'll see the cardinal

Will come to bless their union. Look ! the page,  
The lovely page, how earnestly he gazes  
On our more lovely duchess !—Look ! he joins  
Their hands ;—and now he kneels to kiss those hands  
United ; and she blushes, and he smiles.  
Heaven bless them both ! So ends our weary siege.



# **THE BRIDAL EYE.**

**A DRAMATIC SCENE.**

## CHARACTERS.

LORD FITZ-ALWYN.

HUBERT.

HELEN.

ISABEL.

MARGARET.

SCENE, *A Lady's Apartment in a Baronial Castle.*

## THE BRIDAL EVE.

---

HELEN, ISABEL, MARGARET.

*Isabel.* This is the bridal eve, and yet thy lady—  
Look how she sits on yonder couch, her head  
Bent like a snowdrop, her white clasped hands  
Listlessly hanging on her knee, as though  
No pulse beat in them. All the livelong day  
She hath not moved. Why Helen! Helen Clifford!  
What, not a word to thy poor Isabel—  
Thy cousin Isabel? not one kind word  
When we shall part to-morrow?—not one word?  
Can this be the dear maid whom once I knew  
The merriest heart of merry Cumberland,  
Carolling her blithe songs from morn to eve

As gaily as the gladsome birds that flew

Around her summer bower ?

*Margaret.*

Didst thou ne'er see

A caged linnet ?

*Isabel.* Oh ! how pale she is,

How changed, since o'er those northern hills she swept

On her white Barbary steed, swift as the wind

That waved her glossy tresses, crisp and curled

Like the vine's tendrils, o'er that dimpled cheek

Of roses, and those eyes of smiling light,

And that clear brow ! All in her huntress green

She might have seemed the youngest fairest nymph

Of crescented Diana, such a glow

Of beauty was about her.

*Margaret.*

Hast thou ne'er

Seen a transplanted flower—seen how it droops

And fades and dies ? Your southern gardens ill

Suit the wild heath-bell. She hath never known

Sorrow till now. Now, lady, she hath lost

Her home, her father.

*Isabel.* Is not my home hers?  
And my kind father?

*Margaret.* Ay, but she must leave  
Even this adopted home, and wed——

*Isabel.* The pride  
Of English chivalry! her long betrothed——  
And oh, so worthy; bravest in the field,  
Gayest at revel, kindest every where,  
Is Lord Fitz-Alwyn.

*Margaret.* Grant that it be so,  
Unless she loved him——

*Isabel.* She must love him.

*Margaret.* Look!  
The very casket, that last night he laid  
At Helen's feet, still at her feet it lies,  
Neglected, overthrown. The oaken floor  
Is bright with jewelry, stringed amethysts,  
Rubies and sapphires, linked with massy gold——

*Helen.* Chains! chains! all chains!

*Isabel.* Nay, sweetest coz, see here

This diadem of orient pearl—how well  
Thy raven curls become it! how it sits  
Amid the ringlets, with a queenly pride  
A maiden modesty! Oh fling it not  
Aside!

*Helen.* Give me the wild wood coronal  
Of living pearls, fresh from the fragrant thorn  
And diamonded with dew! Dost thou remember,  
Margaret, the garland of the Queen of May,  
When poor—What's that?

*Isabel.* 'Tis but the distant sound  
Of music at the banquet. They feast high.

*Helen.* Hark! hark! This comes not from the hall.  
'Tis here  
Beneath the casement. Margaret, hark! a harp!  
A northern harp!

*Margaret.* Beshrew these narrow bars!  
I cannot see the minstrel,

*Helen.* Hush! he sings.

SONG (*without*).

High o'er the baron's castle tall  
Rich banners float, with heavy fall,  
And light and song, in mingling tide,  
Pour forth to hail the lovely bride.  
Yet, lady, still the birchen tree  
Waves o'er the cottage on the lea ;  
The babbling stream runs bright and fair,—  
The love-star of the west shines there.

*Isabel.* How breathlessly she listens ! See, she flings  
Backward her ringleted and glossy hair,  
Lest a loose curl might intercept the sound  
Of that sweet music. Margaret, hast thou heard  
The strain before ?

*Margaret.* The air, but not the words.

SONG (*without*).

Mail'd warders pace o'er keep and tower,  
Gay maidens deck the lady's bower ;

Page, Squire, and knight, a princely train,  
Wait duteous at her bridle rein.  
Yet in that cot the milk-white hound,  
The favourite falcon still are found ;  
And one more fond, more true than they,  
Born to adore and to obey.

*Isabel.* 'Tis a strange bridal song ; but it hath waked  
The statue into life. Look, how the blood  
Mounts in her cheek !

*Margaret.* Hush ! it begins again.

SONG (*without*).

The coronet of jewels rare  
Shines proudly o'er her face so fair ;  
And titles high, and higher name  
Fitz-Alwyn's lovely bride may claim.  
And yet the wreath of hawthorn bough  
Once lightlier press'd that snowy brow ;  
And hearts that wither now were gay  
When she was but the Queen of May.



*Isabel.* 'Tis over now. That was the final close.  
Why, Helen, wherefore dost thou wave thy hand  
From the barr'd casement? Wherefore turn away  
With thy fine form so raised, so firm a step,  
So high a brow, and eyes that in their light  
Bear such command?

*Helen.* Margaret, tell Lord Fitz-Alwyn  
That I entreat his presence.

*Margaret.* Dearest lady——

*Helen.* Question me not, but go.

[*Exit MARGARET.*

So! will Fitz-Alwyn,  
Think'st thou, obey the call?

*Isabel.* Doubt not of that.  
Thou hast been coyer than the fresh-caged bird,  
To which poor Margaret likened thee; he scarce  
Hath seen thee, Helen—scarce hath heard thy voice.

*Re-enter MARGARET with LORD FITZ-ALWYN.*

What, here already? Come upon a wish!

*Fitz-Alwyn.* I was not far to seek. Hast thou ne'er  
heard

How wakeful misers haunt the secret spot  
Where their heart lies, their gold? Even so lurked I  
Around my treasure, waiting but to hear  
A distant footfall, or a clapping door,  
Or pleasant rustling of a silken robe,  
Or aught that told of her. What would fair Helen  
Of her true knight?

*Isabel.* Sit down beside us here——  
She best can speak her will.

*Helen.* I would but ask him  
To listen to a simple tale of one  
More simple, a poor northern maid. 'Tis short;  
'Twill not detain thee long.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Oh make it long,  
That I may listen! Could'st thou know the joy  
To sit and hear thee! Oh prolong the tale!  
Speak but till I be weary!

*Isabel.* Now, dear Helen!

*Helen.* There dwelt a knight among the Cumbrian hills  
With one young daughter—an old wealthy knight,  
Who had no joy but in the chase, small joy  
Even in the chase without her. So she grew  
The hardiest mountain-nymph that ever braved  
The summer sun, the winter wind. Poor child !  
She had no mother, none to teach the craft  
Of female mysteries—the lute, the loom,  
The needle—they she knew not. All her lore  
Was of the beauty of the earth and sky,  
The green hills and the bosky vales, the clear  
And gushing waters, and the shifting forms  
Of clouds. All her companions were the dear  
Mute partners of her sports—how speaking they  
Amidst their speechlessness ! Her Barbary steed  
With his bright arching neck, curved up to meet  
Her fondling hand ; her greyhound, playfullest  
Of happy creatures, of a richer white,  
Like marble touched by the sun, leaping and bounding  
If he but heard her voice ; her falcon, proud

To sit upon her wrist. She loved them all,—

I dally with my tale and weary thee.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Speak on. Thy voice hath in it such  
a charm

As the clear warblings of the bird of song,

The nightingale. Her varied notes we hear

All in themselves unlike, yet most unlike

All other melody, till every gush

Of liquid sound seems to our ravished souls

Too brief. Speak on.

*Isabel.* Had she no comrade?

*Helen.* One—

Her own dear father—and—

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Speak on.

*Helen.* Hard by

Dwelt a lone widow, poor, but gently born,

And she too had one child.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* A daughter?

*Helen.* No.

He was some two years older than the maid,

And loved like her the chase, or rather loved  
Nature and beauty—the green wood, the show  
Of hound and huntsman 'midst the forest glades,  
The bright and moving picture. For the chase  
He was too gentle. I have seen—'twas said  
He had been seen to weep when the poor stag,  
Panting and quivering, already dead  
Almost with fear and toil, hath fallen. Yet still  
He loved the Barbary steed, the milk-white hound,  
The bright-eyed falcon. Ever at their side  
Was Hubert Knowles.

*Fitz-Alwyn.*                      And the young maid? Loved she  
One of so soft a mould?

*Helen.*                              From earliest youth,  
From earliest childhood, they were playmates, friends.  
All that she knew of book or song was learnt  
Of Hubert in that low-roofed cot, where dwelt  
His smiling mother. There, beneath the shade  
Of the light fragrant birch and to the sound  
Of running waters, they—I speak of them,

The mountain maid and the fond mother—oft  
Would sit for hours, listening his minstrel lay  
And marking how the poet's fire lit up  
That mild blue eye, and kindled that pale cheek  
Embrowned with a sweet sunniness, and raised  
The veins on his white brow, and seemed to swell  
His slender form into a nobleness  
Of beauty ; till, at length, with head flung back,  
And chest dilating, the forgotten harp  
Dropt silent from his hands, and song was lost  
In the wild crowd of images that pressed  
On his awakened fancy.

*Fitz-Alwyn.*

Did the maid

Wed the young minstrel ?

*Helen.*

No : she was betrothed.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Alas ! I thought so ;—was betrothed  
to one

Unworthy ?

*Helen.* Oh, no, no ; to one too good,

Too great, too noble !

*Fitz-Alwyn.* One whom she loved not ?

*Helen.* One whom she knew not, therefore loved  
not. Love

Is born of love.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* And Hubert ?

*Helen.* He spake not ;

No, not a word ! She had broad lands, and he  
Was poor—

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Why dost thou pause ?

*Helen.* Scarcely she knew,

Till they were parted, what her own heart meant  
When it so throbbed.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Prythee say on.

*Helen.* Oh, look not

So searchingly upon me ! Her dear father  
Died, and her noble wooer from the wars  
Came crowned with honour ; and her guardian sought  
The lonely orphan in her northern hall,  
And brought her to his castle.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Well !

*Helen.*

She met

Him, her betrothed ; and she would fain have told—

But fear, and awe, and maiden shame, and doubt

If Hubert loved, for never till—

*Margaret.*

Hark ! Hark !

Again the sweet harp of the north.

SONG (*without*).

Bless thee ! I may no longer stay,

No longer bid thee think on me ;

I cannot 'bide thy bridal day —

But, Helen, I go blessing thee.

Bless thee ! no vow of thine is broke ;

I asked not thy dear love for me,

Though tears and sighs and blushes spoke—

Yet, Helen, I go blessing thee.

Bless thee ! yet do not quite forget—

Oh, sometimes, sometimes pity me !

My sun of life is early set—

But, Helen, I die blessing thee !



*Helen.* Alas ! alas ! Dost hear him ?

*Fitz-Alwyn.*

Margaret, seek

This harper ; bring him hither. We must check

His boldness.

[*Exit MARGARET.*

Tremble not, my loveliest bride,  
But listen. I have heard thy simple tale  
Of a fair maiden ; now do thou hear mine  
Of a rough soldier. A young warrior once  
Rescued an aged knight, brave to a fault,  
From out the enemy's ranks. Too grateful he  
For common service ; he had one bright gem  
Fit for an emperor's crown,—but only one,—  
Yet that he offered, and the warrior took.

*Helen.* What was the gem ?

*Fitz-Alwyn.*

A girl ! a cherub girl !

She was a child—but such a child !—so full  
Of life and beauty ! sun, and wind, and dew  
Had formed her like gay flowers, or gayer birds,  
Or the light brilliant butterfly, that lives  
In the air. She was all smiles. And he went forth

To battle with that vision, as a dream  
Of gladness round him. Often on the watch  
Or in the trench before a leaguered town,  
Or in the pause which weighs upon the soul  
After the day of battle, would that form,  
In all its witchery, float around his steps,  
Around his heart. Years passed, and as he saw  
The laughing girls of France, he'd pause and say,  
So tall must she be now.—This tale of mine  
Troubles thee, sweet one.

*Helen.*

Oh, go on, my lord !

Prythee go on ! How little she deserved,  
How little deemed—Go on.

*Fitz-Alwyn.*

At length came peace,

And our rude warrior turned him to his home  
And his betrothed bride. His first kind friend,  
The good old knight, was dead ; but he found friends  
In all around her. She alone—how fair  
How beautiful she was ! her charms outran  
Memory and fancy ;—but so pale, so sad,

With head averted and with downcast eyes  
And shivering hands that shrank from his, and speech  
Short and unfrequent, and more chilling cold  
Than silence—Helen, from the hour we met,  
Thy thoughts have injured me. I was thy friend,  
Why treat me as thy tyrant ? Why delay  
The story of thy love ? Why tremble thus ?  
Why hide thy beauteous face ?

*Helen.*

Oh, spare me now,

Fitz-Alwyn ! Spare me ! I have told thee all.

*Fitz-Alwyn.* Ay ; but too late. The bridal hour is  
fixed ;

The guests are bidden ; the huge tables groan  
Already with the banquet ; harp and song  
Already fill the halls ; already flowers  
Bestrew the path where thou and thy fair maids  
Shall tread ; already those fair maids have donned  
Their smiles and blushes. Lady Isabel,  
Say, is it not too late ? Must she not wed  
To-morrow ?

*Helen.* Oh, no ! no ! In mercy no !

*Re-enter MARGARET with HUBERT.*

*Fitz-Alwyn.* This is thy bridal eve. Approach,  
young Sir !

Helen—my Helen—for the first, last time,  
I dare to call thee so.—Look up, dear maid !  
Thou hast done rightly, wisely, kindly, Helen,  
By me, by all. Nay, draw not back thy hand ;  
I will but seal it with one parting kiss.—  
Now take it, Hubert Knowles ! thou hast her heart ;  
They shall not be divided. She is thine.

# **THE CAPTIVE.**

**A DRAMATIC SCENE.**

### CHARACTERS.

**ALBERTO**, *an usurper of the throne of Sicily.*

**THEODORE**, *a boy of fifteen, the rightful King.*

**JULIA**, *a girl of the same age, Alberto's daughter.*

**SCENE**, *A gloomy Chamber in a Gothic Castle in  
Messina.*

## THE CAPTIVE.

---

*Enter ALBERTO and THEODORE.*

*Alberto.* Enter and fear not, trembler. 'Thou shalt live.

*Theodore.* Ay, that I feared.

*Alberto.* Dost hear me, boy? I say  
That thou shalt live.

*Theodore.* I feared so.

*Alberto.* Would'st thou die?

*Theodore.* If it pleased Heaven, most willingly. I  
know

That I'm a prisoner. I shall never walk  
In the sun's blessed light, or feel the touch  
Of the free air, or hear the summer brook  
All idly babbling to the moon, or taste

The morning breath of flowers. The thousand charms  
Which make in our Sicilian Isle mere life  
A thrilling pleasantness, which send a glow  
Through the poorest serf that tills the happy soil—  
I am shut out from all. This is my tomb.  
Uncle, be merciful! I do not ask  
My throne again—Reign! reign! I have forgot  
That I was once a King. But let me bide  
In some small woodland cottage, where green leaves  
May wave around me, and cool breezes kiss  
My brow. Keep me not in a dungeon, uncle,  
Or this dark gloomy chamber. Let me dwell  
In some wild forest. I'll not breathe a word  
That might be dangerous. No! not to the birds  
My songsters, or the fawns my playmates, uncle;  
Thou ne'er shalt hear of me again.

*Alberto.*

Boy! boy!

Cling not about me thus!

*Theodore.*

Thou wilt have mercy!

Thy heart is softening.



*Alberto.* 'Tis too late.—To reign,  
And he at liberty ! I am a child  
Myself, that won by this child's gentleness  
I seemed to waver. Boy, thy fate is fixed ;  
Thyself hast said it. Thou'rt a prisoner,  
And for thy whole life long ; a caged bird.  
Be wiser than the feathered fool that beats  
His wings against the wire. Thou shalt have all  
Thy heart can ask, save freedom, and that never !  
I tell thee so in love, and not in hate ;  
For I would root out hope and fear, and plant  
Patience in thy young soul.

*Theodore.* And Julia ?

*Alberto.* Her

Thou ne'er must see again.

*Theodore.* Never ! Is she  
A prisoner too ? Not once to say farewell !  
Alas ! alas ! that bauble of a crown,  
How it makes kind hearts cruel ! Thou wast once  
In all my little griefs my comforter,

And now—Not see my cousin Julia once !  
Mine own dear cousin Julia ! Let me see her  
Once, only once !—only to catch one sound  
Of that sweet voice, and on that whitest hand  
Drop one fond tear, and steal but one of the bright  
And wavy ringlets from her brow, and pray  
That Heaven may bless her.—Let me see her once,  
But once, and then I'll walk back to my prison,  
And dream away this winter of a life,  
As a silly dormouse in his Christmas nest  
Sleeps through his six months' night. Turn not away !  
Wast thou born pitiless ?

*Alberto.*                      No. I have quelled  
That dangerous softness. Pretty boy, farewell !  
Rest thee content. No harm shall happen thee.

[*Exit.*

*Theodore.* Content ! Oh mockery of grief ! Content !  
Was't not enough to take away my crown,  
To mew me up here in a living tomb,  
Cut off from every human tie, from thee,

Julia, my cousin Julia ; but my jailor  
Must bid me be content ! Would I were dead !  
Forgive me, Heaven, for my impatience !  
I will take better thoughts. 'Tis but to fancy  
This room a quiet hermitage, and pray  
As hermits use through the long silent hours.  
I shall be innocent. Sure, he's a friend  
That shuts me out from sin. Did he not call me  
A caged bird ? I've seen one prune himself,  
And hop from perch to perch, and chirp and sing  
Merrily ! Happy fool, it had forgot  
Blithe liberty ! But man, though he should drag  
A captive's heavy chain, even till he starts  
To hear his own sad voice, cannot forget.  
He wants that blessed gift.—Is not to-day  
The gay procession of the vintagers  
Ere they begin their annual toil ? A relic  
Of the old heathen rites ! Last year I saw it ;  
'Twas a fair pageant ; one that might have graced  
The famous Grecian day, with its long line

Of maidens tripping under the light load  
Of grape-piled baskets on their heads, and youths  
With pipes timing their steps, and younger girls  
And rosy boys dragging the struggling goats,  
By flow'ry garlands. Such procession well  
Had honour'd the god Bacchus. *She* was there,  
And in her innocent gaiety led on  
The virgin troop, distinguish'd but by grace  
Unrivall'd, and a wreath of brightest flowers  
That crown'd her brimming basket. How she sway'd  
Her pretty head to the soft double flute,  
Whilst ever as she bent, the coronal  
Seem'd like to fall, till with a smiling toss  
She flung it up again, and danced along  
With such an airiness, as if her step  
Belong'd not to dull earth. Oh, loveliest maid,  
Must I ne'er see thee more !

*Enter JULIA, through a secret door.*

Who's there ? How cam'st thou ?

Art thou indeed my cousin Julia ? Is't  
Thyself, thy living self ? I cannot trust  
My sight.

*Julia*—(*giving him her hand*). Dost doubt me now ?

*Theodore*. No. But when first  
I saw thee standing with thy pitying eyes  
Fix'd on thy face, thou seem'dst an angel ! Say  
How cam'st thou here ?

*Julia*. He,—I'll not call him father—  
He, who imprisoned thee, forgot, or knew not,  
The secret passage, that in one long chain  
Links all the western chambers. Constance mark'd  
The guarded door. Follow me.

*Theodore*. Where ?

*Julia*. To freedom !  
To happiness !

*Theodore*. Now, blessings on thy head !  
Did I not say thou wast an Angel ? Freedom !  
Ay, that is happiness. A whole life's service  
Were over poor to pay this debt.

*Julia.*

We stay

Too long. Come with me.

*Theodore.*

But to leave thee, sweetest,—

Perchance in danger,—for should he suspect—

No ! I'll stay here,—my very inmost soul

Thanks thee, my kindest cousin. But I'll stay,

I'll not awaken his unnatural hate

'Gainst thee. He loves thee—but he loved me once—

And mated with ambition, even his child,

His only child, were nothing. I'll stay here,

In my lone prison. Think of me as one

Freed from a cumbrous load of state and care,

Held to the world but by the undying love

That knits my soul to thine. Go and be happy,

And in thy bliss shall I be blest. We still

Shall breathe the same air, Julia. I may catch

From out my window a short stolen glance

Of thy fair form ; may hear, when distant doors

Shall chance to open, a brief passing sound

Of thy dear voice ; and sometimes thou may'st glide

Even to this gloomy chamber, bringing light,  
And life, and joy. A moment since I pined  
For liberty. Now I would rather dwell  
In a deep dungeon, where such visions come,  
Than fill a throne without them. Thou wilt deign  
To visit the poor captive, wilt thou not ?  
Oh, dearest, to be banished from thy sight  
Were worse than death. Thou'lt come again ? But now  
Away ! I fear the king.

*Julia.* He whom thou call'st such  
Is busy at the council. Theodore,  
In mercy follow me ! I too shall share  
Thy flight.

*Theodore.* Thou ! Thou ! Oh sweetest, dearest, best !  
I stand as in a dream.—Thou go with me !  
Whither ? and wherefore ?

*Julia.* Question not ; but come.  
There is a Spanish ship in harbour here,  
With her sails spread for instant voyage. My Constance  
And her bold captain are betroth'd. He waits

With sure disguises, and hath promised us  
A safe and pleasant home in fair Castile.  
A mountain hut close by a gushing spring,  
Where the huge cork trees fling their heavy shade  
O'er herds and flocks ; and we shall lead a calm  
And happy pastoral life ; a shepherd thou  
With pipe and crook, and I a cottage maid,  
A careful housewife. Thou shalt see how soon  
I'll learn the rustic craft, to milk my ewes  
Or press the snowy curd, or haply mould  
The richer cheese. Shalt thou not like, dear cousin,  
To be a shepherd on the downy hills,  
Tending thy flock all day, and I to bring  
Water and country cates, an homely meal,  
And sing and prattle at thy side, most like  
A mountain bee ? I'll wager, Theodore,  
I prove the thriftier peasant.

*Theodore.*

But to bend thee

To poor and servile toil—

*Julia.*

Poor ! I have here



Jewels to buy an earldom. See ! a sword too,  
To guard us on the way. Take it. Dear cousin,  
We waste the hour.

*Theodore.* My Julia, tempt me not  
To selfish and ungrateful sin. The saints  
May witness for me, that I ever loathed  
Pomp and its slavery. The lot thou offerest  
Hath been the vision of my dreamy hours  
All my life long. But thou so proudly reared  
So delicately served,—thou born a princess,  
And nurtured like a queen, how could'st thou bear  
The peasant's lowly lot ?—Had I the crown  
That once prest my young brow—had I a throne  
To share with thee, my fairest—but an exile—  
A houseless fugitive,—Alas ! Alas !  
Tempt me no more, sweet maiden ! Stay and reign  
In thine own Sicily.

*Julia.* I'll stay and die,  
Since thou dost spurn me from thee. Fare thee well !  
Yet, in thy calmer thoughts,—if thou should'st think

Again on thy poor friend—Oh, deem her not  
Bold or unmaidenly ! We lived and loved  
As brother and as sister.—

*Theodore.* Far, far dearer !

*Julia.* And as a sister in our mutual grief  
I came to thee. Oh, let us fly, dear cousin !  
In pity, let us fly ! My cruel father—

*Theodore.* Cruel to thee ?—to thee !

*Julia.* Alas, to bind  
The subtle traitor Lanza to his cause,  
He offers up his child. Another day,  
And I must wed.

*Theodore.* Give me the sword. Wed ! Cousin,  
I'll fly with thee to the end of the earth. Wed Lanza !  
Wed any man ! He must fight well that wins thee,  
Boy though I be, my Julia ! Haste thee, sweet,  
Each moment's worth an age. Away ! Away !

*Julia.* Heaven speed our steps !

*Theodore.* Away !

[*Exeunt.*

**THE**  
**MASQUE OF THE SEASONS,**

**FROM**  
**PIESCO AND DORIA, AN UNFINISHED TRAGEDY.**

**CHARACTERS OF THE PLAY.**

**GIACOMO,  
ISABELLA,  
DORIA,  
FIESCO,  
LADIES *and* GENTLEMEN..**

**CHARACTERS OF THE MASQUE.**

**SPRING,  
SUMMER,  
AUTUMN,  
WINTER.**

**SCENE, *A Hall in the Fiesco Palace in Genoa.***

THE  
MASQUE OF THE SEASONS.

---

*Giacomo.* Where is Fiesco now ?

*Isabella.* Oh you should see him !

Celia is showing him her gay saloon  
Sparkling with lamps and flowers, and her quaint masque  
Of country lasses, cunningly pranked out  
With rustic finery. The little thief  
Hath stolen all my roses—all save this—  
To deck the pretty damsel she calls spring.  
And there is she turning them round and round  
To be admired ; and there are they, all blushes,  
Curtsying with coy and shamefaced bashfulness,  
Yet full of a strange joy ; and there is he

Dropping kind words and kinder smiles about,  
Delighting and delighted : We must join them.

### THE MASQUE.

*Enter SPRING.*

*Spring.* Room for the jocund queen of new-born  
flowers !

Bathed in light fragrant airs and sunny showers  
I come. Beneath my steps the grass is set  
With violets, cowslips, daffodils, all wet  
With freshest dew as any crystal clear.  
The youth, the smile, the music of the year  
Am I. Who loves not Spring ? Gay songs of birds  
Tell my delights, and rough uncouthest words  
Of shepherds. Fairest ladies here are posies  
Of crisp curled hyacinths, pale maiden roses,  
And bright anemonies of richer dyes  
Than rubies, amethysts, or azure eyes  
Of sapphires. Summer ! hasten leafy queen !  
And Autumn help to bind my garlands sheen !

*Enter SUMMER.*

*Summer.* In a green nook, whose mossy bed receives  
Shade from my own unnumbered world of leaves,  
I heard a voice call Summer.

*Spring.* Hast thou not  
Brought flowery tribute? To thy favourite grot  
I sent my deffest, trustiest messenger,  
A dappled butterfly, whose pinions whir  
Like thy mailed beetle's. He was charged to say  
That great Doria would be here to-day——  
Did not that rouse thee?

*Summer.* Yes; his name hath won  
To my deep solitudes, where scarce the sun  
Can pierce the heavy umbrage. The cool places  
To which the sweltering noon the wild deer chases;  
The sheltered pools, which oft the swallows winglet  
Skims, or where lazily her darker ringlet  
Some Naiad floating in her beauty laves;  
The little bubbling springs, whose tiny waves

Do murmur gently round old pollard trees,  
Mingling their music with the stir of bees ;  
All these are mine : mine the wild forest glade  
Where the bright sun comes flickering through the shade,  
Gilding the turfy wood-walks ; and his name  
Is wafted through them with an odorous fame,  
Balm breathing. Take my tribute. Strawberries bred  
In shrubby dingles ; cherries round and red,  
And flowers that love the sun.

*Spring.* Sweet flowers are thine,  
Carnation, pink, acacia, jessamine,  
With coral budded myrtle which discloses  
White pearly blossoms, and perfumed musk-roses.

*Enter AUTUMN.*

*Autumn.* Fair queens of leaves and flowers give  
way to me,  
To Autumn and his fruits. Do you not see  
How I am laden ? Corn and grapes are here,  
And olives. Of the riches of the year



I am the joyful gatherer. Merry nights  
Have I at harvest time, and rare delights  
When the brown vintagers beneath the trees  
Dance, and drink in the sunset and the breeze.  
And I have brought young tendrils of the vine  
Amidst your gayer garlands to entwine  
For great Doria.

*Enter WINTER.*

*Spring.* Ah ! what form is this ?  
Stern Winter hence ! Come not to mar our bliss  
With frosts and tempests. Icy season hence !  
See Summer sickens at thy influence,  
And I can feel my coronet withering.

*Winter.* Hence then thyself, fair, dainty, delicate  
thing !

Light fluttering playmate of the infant loves,  
Mistress of butterflies and turtle doves,  
Hence ! and bear with thee that gay blooming toy,  
To a fair girl from an enamoured boy

Fit homage, not for heroes. In this form  
Thou hail'st a friend, Doria ! The wild storm  
The raging of the elements, the wave  
That Winter flings aloft, are to the brave  
A victory and a glory. Thou hast breasted  
My billows, mountain-high and foamy crested,  
And vanquished them. And I can guerdon thee,  
I, barren Winter, from the unfading tree  
To valour consecrate. This laurel crown  
Wear ! as it clips thy temples, thy renown  
Will cast upon its shining leaves a light  
Ineffable. Approach, ye Seasons bright,  
With gifts and garlands ; let us offer here  
The blended homage of the circling year.

## **SONNETS.**



## I.

WRITTEN IN A BLANK-PAPER BOOK GIVEN TO THE  
AUTHOR BY A FRIEND.

My little book, as o'er thy page so white,  
With half-closed eyes in idlest mood I lean,  
Whose is the form that rises still between  
Thy page and me,—a vision of delight ?  
Look on those eyes by the bright soul made bright ;  
Those curls, which who Antinous' bust hath seen  
Hath loved ; that shape which might beseem a queen ;  
That blush of purity ; that smile of light.  
'Tis she ! my little book dost thou not own  
Thy mistress ? She it is, the only she !  
Dost thou not listen for the one sweet tone  
Of her unrivalled voice ? Dost thou not see  
*Her* look of love, for whose dear sake alone,  
My little book, thou art so dear to me ?

## II.

ON MRS. HOFLAND'S PICTURE OF JERUSALEM AT  
THE TIME OF THE CRUCIFIXION.

Jerusalem ! and at the fatal hour !  
No need of dull and frivolous question here !  
No need of human agents to make clear  
The most tremendous act of human power !  
The distant cross ; the rent and falling tower ;  
The opening graves, from which the dead uprear  
Their buried forms ; the elemental fear  
Where horrid light and horrid darkness lower ;  
All tell the holy tale : the mystery  
And solace of our souls. Awe-struck we gaze  
On that so mute yet eloquent history !  
Awe-struck and sad at length our eyes we raise  
To go ;—yet oft return that scene to see  
Too full of the great theme to think of praise.

## III.

## THE FORGET-ME-NOT.

Blossom that lov'st on shadowy banks to lie,  
Gemming the deep rank grass with flowers so blue,  
That the pure turquoise matched with their rich hue  
Pales, fades, and dims ; so exquisite a dye,  
That scarce the brightness of the Autumn sky,  
Which sleeps upon the bosom of the stream,  
On whose fringed margent thy star-flowerets gleam  
In its clear azure with thy tints may vie ;  
Shade-loving flower, I love thee ! not alone  
That thou dost haunt the greenest coolest spot,  
For ever, by the tufted alder thrown,  
Or arching hazel, or vine mantled cot,  
But that thy very name hath a sweet tone  
Of parting tenderness—Forget me not !

## IV.

TO MR. HENRY RICHARDSON,

ON HIS PERFORMANCE OF ADMETUS IN THE ALCESTIS OF EURIPIDES,  
AS REPRESENTED IN THE ORIGINAL GREEK AT READING SCHOOL.  
*October, 1824.*

For us, on whose sealed ear the classic strain  
Of Athens' tenderest bard would idly fall  
As instrumental music, or the call  
Of wordless nightingales, for us again  
I thank thee, wondrous boy ! that not in vain  
The scene hath overpast which held in thrall  
Milton \* and Wordsworth, mightiest names of all  
Living or dead that haunt the Muses' fane !

\* Milton's allusion to the Alcestis in the sonnet on his wife is well known. Mr. Wordsworth in his *Laodamia* has the following exquisite lines on the same subject.

——— " Did not Hercules by force  
Wrest from the guardian monster of the tomb  
Alcestis a reanimated corse,  
Given back to dwell on earth in beauty's bloom ? "



Thy genius was a language ; voice and look,  
Gesture and stillness the deep mystery  
Of a strong grief unveiled. As lightnings dart  
Their quivering brightness o'er the world, each nook  
Illumining and thrilling, so from thee  
Burst the storm-cloud of passion on the heart.

## V.

WRITTEN JULY, 1824.

How oft amid the heaped and bedded hay,  
Under the oak's broad shadow deep and strong,  
Have we sate listening to the noonday song  
(If song it were monotonously gay)  
Which crept along the field, the summer lay  
Of the grasshopper. Summer is come in pride  
Of fruit and flower, garlanded as a bride,  
And crowned with corn, and graced with length of day.  
But cold is come with her. We sit not now  
Listening that merry music of the earth  
Like Ariel "beneath the blossomed bough;"  
But all for chillness round the social hearth  
We cluster.—Hark!—a note of kindred mirth  
Echoes!—Oh, wintery cricket, welcome thou!

## VI.

## TO MY MOTHER SLEEPING.

Sleep on, my mother ! sweet and innocent dreams

Attend thee, best and dearest ! Dreams that gild

Life's clouds like setting suns, with pleasure filled

And saintly joy, such as thy mind beseems,—

Thy mind where never stormy passion gleams,

Where their soft nest the dove-like virtues build

And calmest thoughts, like violets distilled,

Their fragrance mingle with bright wisdom's beams.

Sleep on, my mother ! not the lily's bell

So sweet ; not the enamoured west-wind's sighs

That shake the dew-drop from her snowy cell

So gentle ; not that dew-drop ere it flies

So pure. E'en slumber loves with thee to dwell

Oh model most beloved of good and wise !

## VII.

## ON A BEAUTIFUL WOMAN.

Look where she sits in languid loveliness,  
Her feet upgathered, and her turban'd brow  
Bent o'er her hand, her robe in ample flow  
Disparted ! Look in attitude and dress  
She sits and seems an Eastern Sultanness !  
And music is about her, and the glow  
Of young fair faces, and sweet voices go  
Forth at her call, and all about her press.  
But no Sultana she ! As in a book  
In that fine form and lovely brow we trace  
Divinest purity, and the bright look  
Of genius. Much is she in mind and face  
Like the fair blossom of some woodland nook  
The wind-flower \*,——delicate and full of grace.

\* The Hampshire name of the wood-anemone.

## VIII.

TO MISS PORDEN \*,

ON HER POEM OF CŒUR DE LION.

Proudly thy sex may claim thee, young and fair  
And lofty poetess ! proudly may tell  
How thou hast sung the arms invincible  
Of him the lion-hearted, in the snare  
Of Austria, as amid the sultry glare  
Of Palestine, triumphant ; or the spell  
Of poor Maimonne ; or the thoughts that swell  
When suddenly the old remembered air  
Rings from the harp of Blondel ; or the bright  
And gorgeous train of England's chivalry ;  
Or, worthy of his kingly foe, the might  
Of paynim Saladin. Oh, proud of thee  
Is woman ! proud of thy bold muse's flight !  
Proud of thy gentle spirit's purity.

\* My late dear and lamented friend Mrs. Francklin.

## IX.

TO MR. HAYDON,

ON A STUDY FROM NATURE.

“Tears in the eyes and on the lips a sigh !”

Haydon ! the great, the beautiful, the bold,

Thy wisdom's king, thy mercy's God unfold,

There art and genius blend in union high.

But this is of the soul. The majesty

Of grief is here, grief cast in such a mould

As Niobe of yore. The tale is told

All at a glance—A childless mother I !

The tale is told :—but who can e'er forget

That e'er hath seen that visage of despair !

With unaccustom'd tears our cheeks are wet ;

Heavy our hearts with unaccounted care ;

Upon our thoughts it presses like a debt ;

We close our eyes in vain—that face is there !

## X.

## ENGLEFIELD HOUSE :

THE SEAT OF R. BENYON DE BEAUVOIR, ESQ. NEAR READING.

There is a pride, as of an elder day  
About thee, Englefield ! midway thy steep  
And wood-crowned eminence, where round thee sweep  
Green flowery lawns, trees in the fresh array  
Of summer, meadows with the close-piled hay  
Studded, blue waters that do seem to creep  
All listlessly for heat, and cots that sleep  
I' the sunshine. How thou tower'st above the gay  
And lovely landscape, in the majesty  
Of thy old beauty ! Even those mansions bright,  
That pretty town, that gothic chapelry \*  
With front and pinnacle so rich and light,  
Seem all as toys and costly pageantry  
Made but for thy proud halls and their delight.

\* The new Church at Theale, a beautiful specimen of modern Gothic.

## XI.

NEW YEAR'S DAY. 1819.

TO MRS. DICKINSON.

Banquet and song, and dance and revelry!—

Auspicious year born in so fair a light

Of gaiety and beauty ! happy night

Sacred to social pleasure, and to thee

Its dear dispenser, of festivity

The festive queen, the moving spirit bright

Of music and the dance, of all delight

The gentle mistress, bountiful and free.

Oh happy night ! and oh succeeding day

Far happier ! when 'mid converse and repose

Handel's sweet strains came sweetened, and the lay

Divine of that old Florentine arose,

Dante, and Genius flung his torch-like ray

O'er the dark tale of Ugolino's woes.



## XII.

## ON TWO OF MR. HOFLAND'S LANDSCAPES.

A mighty power is in that roaring main  
Broken into huge and foamy waves, which knock  
Against yon mass of battlemented rock  
Dark with storm-laden cloud, and wind-tost rain.  
A lovely power is in that sunny plain  
Where in their beauty the clear waters sleep,  
Fringed in by tender grass, or idly creep  
Where the close tufted banks their course restrain.  
Oh Painter of the elements ! to thee  
Alike the gentle or tempestuous hour :  
The throes and heavings of the wintery sea,  
Whilst earth, and sky, and storm, and darkness, lour ;  
Or the sweet sunshine brooding peacefully  
O'er wandering rivulet and summer bower.

## XIII.

ON HEARING MR. TALFOURD PLEAD IN THE ASSIZE-  
HALL AT READING, ON HIS FIRST CIRCUIT,

*March 1821.*

Wherefore this stir ? 'Tis but a common cause  
Of Cottage plunder : yet in every eye  
Sits expectation ;—murmuring whispers fly  
Along the crowded court ;—and then a pause ;—  
And then a clear crisp voice invokes the laws,  
With such a full and rapid mastery  
Of sound and sense, such nice propriety,  
Such pure and perfect taste, that scarce the applause  
Can be to low triumphant words chained down -  
Or more triumphant smiles. Yes, this is he,  
The young and eloquent spirit whose renown  
Makes proud his birth-place ! a high destiny  
Is his ; to climb to honour's palmy crown  
By the strait path of truth and honesty.

## XIV.

## THE FISHING-SEAT, WHITEKNIGHTS.

There is a sweet according harmony  
In this fair scene : this quaintly fluted bower,  
These sloping banks with tree and shrub and flower  
Bedecked, and these pure waters, where the sky  
In its deep blueness shines so peacefully ;  
Shines all unbroken, save with sudden light  
When some proud swan majestically bright  
Flashes her snowy beauty on the eye ;  
Shines all unbroken, save with sudden shade  
When from the delicate birch a dewy tear  
The west-wind brushes. Even the bee's blithe trade,  
The lark's clear carols, sound too loudly here ;  
A spot it is for far-off music made,  
Stillness and rest—a smaller Windermere.

## XV.

## TO A FRIEND ON HER BIRTH-DAY.

This is the day sacred to love and mirth  
And tender wishes ; this the favoured day  
(Sweet superstition !) when the artless lay  
Is welcomed, and the token little worth,  
And the fond vows, which live and have their birth  
In the affectionate heart ; a holiday  
It is, for good and gentle, fair and gay,  
My lovely Jane, it gave thee to the earth.  
And thou hast trodden life's path with a wise glee,  
Maid of the laughing eye ! Were I the Queen  
Of that so famous land of Faëry  
Where quaintest spirits weave their spells unseen,  
No better benison I'd pour on thee  
Than to be happy still as thou hast been.

## XVI.

## ON LEAVING A FAVOURITE PICTURE.

Young world of peace and loveliness farewell !  
Farewell to the clear lake ; the mountains blue ;  
The grove, whose tufted paths our eyes pursue  
Delighted ; the white cottage in the dell  
By yon old church ; the smoke from that small cell  
Amid the hills slow rising ; and the hue  
Of summer air, fresh, delicate, and true,  
Breathing of light and life, the master spell !  
Work of the Poet's eye, the Painter's hand,  
How close to nature art thou, yet how free  
From earthly stain ! the beautiful, the bland,  
The rose, the nightingale resemble thee ;—  
Thou art most like the blissful Fairy-land  
Of Spenser, or Mozart's fine melody.

## XVII.

## WRITTEN IN A FRIEND'S ALBUM.

Book of memorials fair ! I cannot trace  
On thy white page the quaintly pencilled bower ;  
I have no skill to bid the vivid flower  
Bloom 'mid thy leaves ; nor with the immortal grace  
Of proud Apollo, or the goddess face  
Of Hebe deck them. 'Las ! my ruder power  
Can but bear record faint of many an hour  
Passed thou mute witness in thy dwelling-place.  
Oh happiest hours, that ever me befall,  
Rich in commingling mind, in fancy's play !  
Oh happiest hours, whether in music's thrall,  
Or converse sweet as music pass the day !  
Oh happiest hours ! and most beloved of all  
The cherished friend that speeds them on their way !

## XVIII.

## ON VISITING DONNINGTON CASTLE,

SAID TO HAVE BEEN THE LATEST RESIDENCE OF CHAUCER, AND  
CELEBRATED FOR ITS RESISTANCE TO THE ARMY OF THE  
PARLIAMENT DURING THE CIVIL WARS.

Oh, for some gentle spirit to surround  
With clinging ivy thy high-seated towers,  
Fair Donnington, and wipe from Chaucer's bowers  
The last rude touch of war ! All sight, all sound  
Of the old strife boon nature from the ground  
Hath banished. Here the trench no longer lours,  
But, like a bosky dell, begirt with flowers  
And garlanded with May, sinks dimpling round

A very spot for youthful lover's dreams  
In the prime hour. Grisildis' mournful lay,  
The "half-told tale\*" would sound still sweeter here.  
Oh for some hand to hide with ivy spray  
War's ravages, and chase the jarring themes  
Of King and State, Roundhead and Cavalier!

"Or call up him who left half told  
The story of Cambuscan bold."

*Milton of Chaucer.—Il Penseroso.*



## XIX.

WRITTEN AFTER A VISIT FROM SOME FRIENDS.

I could have lengthened out one fleeting hour  
Into an age ; sitting at set of sun  
Under the long, low, open shed where won  
The mellow evening light through leaf and flower ;  
Playing the hostess in that summer bower  
To such dear guests, whilst rose the antique song  
By those young sister voices poured along  
So wild, so pure, so clear, full of sweet power  
Ringing and vibrating. It was a lay  
That sent a smile into the very heart ;  
As when the early lark shoots up in May  
With his blithe matins, rarer than all art  
Save this. Oh happiest and most fleeting day,  
Why art thou gone so soon ! Why must we part !

## XX.

ON AN INTENDED REMOVAL FROM A FAVOURITE  
RESIDENCE. *November, 1820.*

Adieu, beloved and lovely home ! Adieu,  
Thou pleasant mansion, and ye waters bright,  
Ye lawns, ye aged elms, ye shrubberies light  
(My own cotemporary trees, that grew  
Even with my growth ;) ye flowers of orient hue,  
A long farewell to all ! Ere fair to sight  
In summer-shine ye bloom with beauty dight,  
Your halls we leave for scenes untried and new.  
Oh shades endeared by memory's magic power  
With strange reluctance from your paths I roam !  
But home lives not in lawn, or tree, or flower,  
Nor dwells tenacious in one only dome.  
Where smiling friends adorn the social hour,  
Where they, the dearest are, there will be home.

## XXI.

ON THE DEPARTURE OF A FRIEND TO LISBON FOR  
THE RECOVERY OF HER HEALTH. *Nov.* 1813.

Thou freshest spirit, that on Lisbon's shore  
Didst shake health-breathing airs so cheerily  
From thy soft wing, as oft the murmuring bee  
Scatters the full-blown rose,—the cannon's roar  
Scared thee, mild spirit! and the flood of gore,  
Tinging the bosom of thy heaving sea,  
Defiled thy snowy feet, and thou didst flee  
From ills thou could'st not cure and must deplore.  
War's demons are gone by. Thy lovely strand  
Is purified. Oh spirit thither bend  
Thine airy flight, and wave thy healing wand  
O'er yon fair form where grace and virtue blend!  
Then proudly waft her to her native land—  
Her, loved and blest, the mother, wife and friend.

## XXII.

WRITTEN OCTOBER, 1825.

Within my little garden is a flower,  
A tuft of flowers, most like a sheaf of corn,  
The lilac blossomed daisy that is born  
At Michaelmas, wrought by the gentle power  
Of this sweet Autumn into one bright shower  
Of bloomy beauty ; Spring hath nought more fair,  
Four sister butterflies inhabit there,  
Gay gentle creatures ! Round that odorous bower  
They weave their dance of joy the livelong day,  
Seeming to bless the sunshine ; and at night  
Fold their enamelled wings as if to pray.  
Home-loving pretty ones ! would that I might  
For richer gifts as cheerful tribute pay,  
So meet the rising dawn, so hail the parting ray !

# SONGS.



## I.

Evening's richest colours glowing

Skirt the golden West ;

Snowy clouds, like vapours flowing,

Crown its beamy crest.

I've nothing seen so rosy red,

Nor aught so brightly pure,

Since Laura's cheek with blushes spread,

And Laura's brow demure.

O'er its pebbly channel creeping

Flows the murmuring tide ;

Through the gloomy pine-grove sweeping

Twilight breezes glide.

I've heard no sound so softly clear,

Nor breathed such balmy air,

Since the sweet voice of Laura dear,

The sigh of Laura fair.

## II.

Sweet is the balmy evening hour ;  
And mild the glow-worm's light ;  
And soft the breeze that sweeps the flower,  
With pearly dew-drops bright.  
I love to loiter by the rill  
And catch each trembling ray ;—  
Fair as they are, they mind me still  
Of fairer things than they.

What is the breath of closing flowers  
But feeling's gentlest sigh ?  
What are the dew-drop's crystal showers  
But tears from pity's eye ?  
What are the glow-worms by the rill  
But fancy's flashes gay ?  
I love them, for they mind me still  
Of one more fair than they.



## III.

'Tis a gay summer morn, and the sunbeams dance  
On the glittering waves of the rapid Durance,  
Where Sir Reginald's castle its broad shadow throws  
O'er the bay and the linden, the cypress and rose.  
And in that rosy bower a lady so bright  
Sits telling her beads for her-own absent knight,  
Whilst her little son plays round the fond mother's knee  
And the wandering stock-dove is scared by his glee.

'Tis a calm summer eve, and the moonbeams dance  
On the glittering waves of the rapid Durance,  
Where Sir Reginald's castle its broad shadow throws  
O'er the bay and the linden, the cypress and rose.  
But the pitiless spoiler is master there,  
For gone is the lady, and gone the young heir ;  
The good knight hath perished beyond the salt sea,  
And they, like the stock-dove, poor wanderers be.

## IV.

The lily bells are wet with dew,  
The morning sunbeams kiss the rose,  
And rich of scent and bright of hue  
The summer garden glows.  
Then up, and weave a garland, sweet,  
To braid thy raven hair,  
Before the noontide's withering heat  
Strike on those flowerets fair.

A flickering cloud is in the sky,  
A murmuring whisper in the gale ;  
They tell that stormy rain is nigh,  
Or desolating hail.  
Then up, and weave a garland, sweet,  
To deck thy glossy hair,  
Nor wait till evening tempests beat  
Upon those flowerets fair.

## V.

With hound and horn and huntsman's call  
They chase the fallow deer ;—  
And thou, the noblest of them all,  
Why dost thou loiter here ?

Thou canst not deem within her bower  
Thine own true love to see ;—  
Dost thou not know at matin hour  
I ne'er can come to thee ?

My sister's voice is on the stair,  
All in her maiden glee ;  
My mother's flitting every where,  
And calling still on me.

My father's by the southern wall,  
Pruning the old vine tree ;  
My brothers playing in the hall ;—  
And all are wanting me.

Then off, and mount thy gallant steed  
To hunt the fallow deer ;  
Off, off, and join the chase with speed,  
Nor loiter longer here.

At eventide my mother sits,  
Her knitting on her knee,  
And wakes by starts, and dreams by fits ;—  
But never dreams of me,

At eventide my sister fair  
Steals to the great oak tree ;  
I may not tell who meets her there,—  
But nought want they of me.

At eventide, beside the bowl,  
    With some old comrade free,  
My father many a song doth troll  
    But never thinks on me.

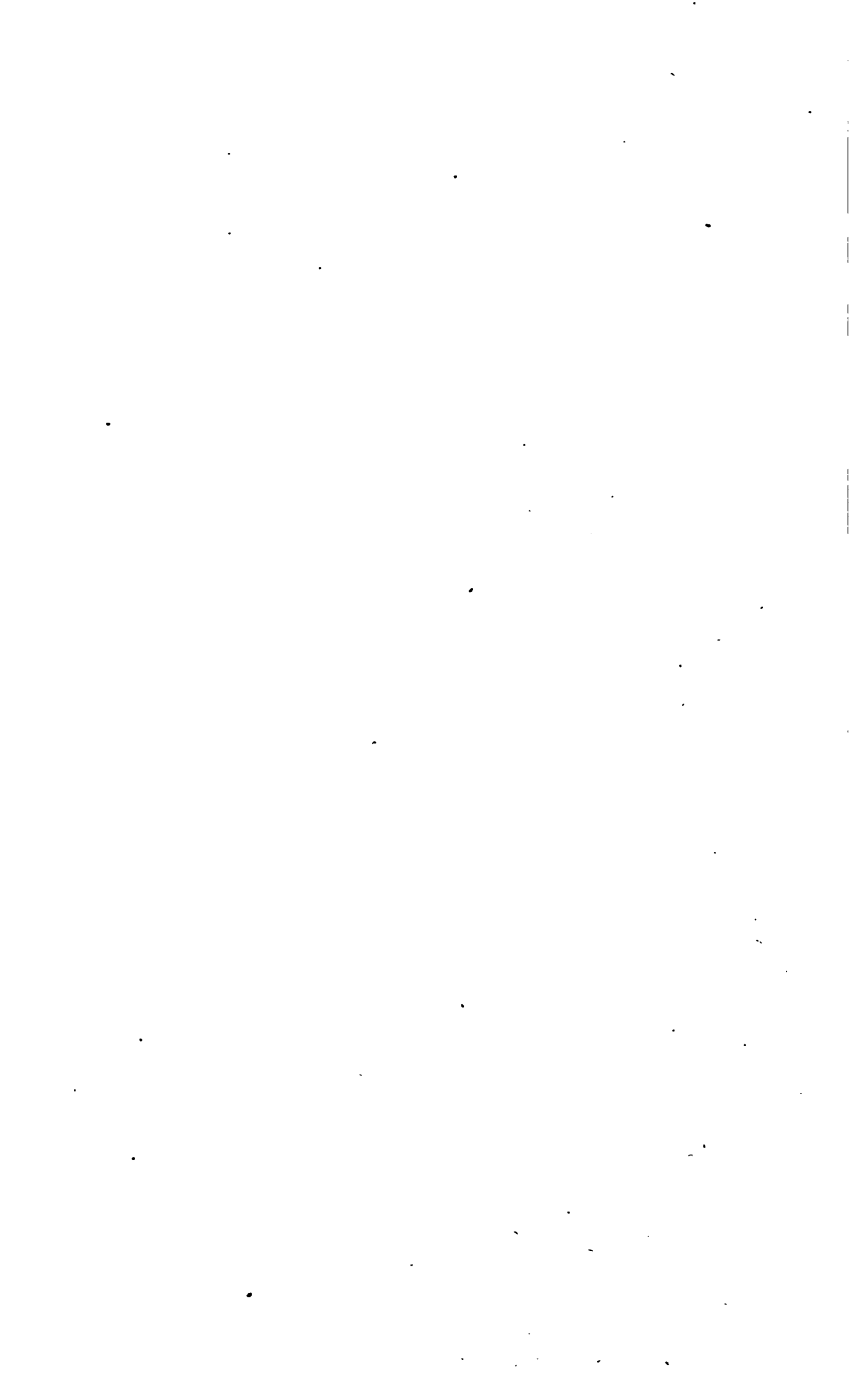
Off, then, with hound, and echoing horn  
    To chase the fallow deer ;—  
Nor deem again at peep of morn  
    To meet thy true-love here.



# **ANTIGONE.**

**A PORTRAIT IN VERSE.**

**FROM THE ŒDIPUS TYRANNUS, THE ŒDIPUS COLONEUS, AND THE  
ANTIGONE OF SOPHOCLES.**





## ANTIGONE.

---

'Twas noon ; beneath the ardent ray  
Proud Thebes in all her glory lay ;  
On pillar'd porch, on marble wall,  
On temple, portico, and hall,  
The summer sunbeams gaily fall,  
Bathing, as in a flood of light,  
Each sculptured frieze and column bright.  
Dirce's pure stream meanders there,  
A silver mirror clear and fair ;  
Now giving back the deep-blue sky,  
And now the city proud and high,  
And now the sacred grove ;

And sometimes on its wave a shade,  
Making the light more lovely, play'd,

When some close-brooding dove  
Flew from her nest, on rapid wing,  
For needful food across the spring,

Or sought her home of love.  
The very air in that calm hour,  
Seem'd trembling with the conscious power  
Of its own balminess ;

The herbage, if by light foot press'd,  
Sent up sweet odours from its breast ;—

Sure, if coy happiness  
E'er dwelt on earth, 'twas in that clime  
Of beauty, in that noon-day prime  
Of thrilling pleasantness !

But who are they before the gate  
Of Thebes convened in silent state ?  
Sad grey-haired men, with looks bow'd down,  
Slaves to a tyrant's haughty frown ;

And he the wicked king, and she  
The royal maid Antigone,  
Passing to death. Awhile she laid  
Her clasp'd hands on her heart, and stay'd  
Her firmer step, as if to look  
On the fair world which she forsook ;  
And then the sunbeams on her face  
Fell, as on sculptured Nymph or Grace,  
Lighting her features with a glow  
That seemed to mock their patient woe.

She stay'd her onward step, and stood  
A moment's space ;—oh, what a flood  
Of recollected anguish stole  
In that brief moment o'er her soul !  
The concentrated grief of years,  
The mystery, horror, guilt, and tears,  
The story of her life past by,  
E'en in the heaving of a sigh !

She thought upon the blissful hour  
Of infancy, when, as a flower  
Set in the sun, she grew,  
Without a fear, without a care,  
Enjoying, innocent and fair,  
As buoyant as the mountain air,  
As pure as morning dew ;  
'Till burst at once like lightning's flame,  
The tale we tremble but to name,  
Of them from whom her being came,  
Poor Œdipus, and one,  
The wretched yet unconscious dame,  
Who wedded with her son !  
Then horror fast on horror rose :  
*She* maddening died beneath her woes,  
Whilst crownless, sightless, hopeless, *he*  
Dared to outlive that agony.  
Through many a trackless path and wild  
The blind man and his duteous child

Wandered, till pitying Theseus gave

The shelter brief, the mystic grave.

One weary heart finds rest at last :

But, when to Thebes the maiden pass'd,

The god's stern wrath was there :—

Her brothers each by other slain,

And one upon the bloody plain

Left festering in the sun and rain,

Tainting the very air :

For none, the haughty Creon said,

On pain of death should yield the dead

Burial, or tear, or sigh ;

And, for alone she feebly strove

To pay the decent rites of love,

The pious maid must die.

She paus'd—and in that moment rose

As in a mirror all her woes ;

She spake,—the flush across her cheek

Told of the woe she would not speak,

\* As a brief thought of Hæmon stole  
With bitter love across her soul.  
“ I die,—and what is death to me  
But freedom from long misery ?  
Joyful to fall before my time,  
I die ; and, tyrant, hear my crime :  
I did but strive his limbs to shield  
From the gaunt prowlers of the field ;  
I did but weave, as nature weaves,  
A shroud of grass and moss and leaves ;  
I did but scatter dust to dust,

\* Antigone was beloved by Hæmon the son of the tyrant Creon, who, after the death of his mistress, killed himself for grief. In the fine play of Sophocles, Antigone only once alludes to her unhappy lover :

“ Oh my dearest Hæmon !

And is it thus thy father doth disgrace thee ?”

In the original her complaint consists but of one line, which, as the translator, Dr. Francklin, observes, “ a modern writer would have spun out to many a page.”

As the desert wind on marble bust ;

I did but as the patient wren

And the kind redbreast do for men.

I die—and what is death to me ?

But tremble in thy tyranny,

Tyrant ! and ye, base slaves of power,

Tremble at freedom's coming hour !

I die—and death is bliss to me !”

Then, with a step erect and free,

With brow upraised and even breath,

The royal virgin passed to death.





## INDEPENDENCE.

These stanzas were occasioned by reading the following paragraph in an old magazine. "There now resides in Cawsand a man who has not slept in a bed for thirty years. He was a sailor in his youth and unfortunate. He always refused an asylum in the workhouse, subsisting on the miserable pittance of two-pence or three-pence a day, earned by carrying pitchers of water, and indignantly preferring this to living by the bounty of others. In the coldest night of winter he would sleep under a boat on the beach of Cawsand; at other times he took refuge in the cliffs of the rocks, and couched himself with the raven and the otter." I have endeavoured to give more animation to this little poem, by putting the sentiments into the mouth of the hero of the tale; the anecdote itself seems to me a fine instance of English spirit.



## INDEPENDENCE.

---

“ Talk not to me of food or bed

Or the warm winter coat :—

Whence comes the meat with which you're fed ?

What does that dress denote ?

“ What is that room from storms aloof

In which so snug you lie ?

What are they all, coat, bed and roof ?

Badges of slavery.

“ Must you not cringe and beg and fawn,

Slave even to the clocks,

Your matin call the bolts undrawn,

Your vesper creaking locks ?

“ Must you not in that house miscalled  
Of miserable sloth,—  
Your mind and body both enthralled,  
Degraded, sunken both ;—

“ Must you not bear the bitter taunt  
Of oft imputed blame ?  
Your only crimes old age and want !  
Disease your only shame !

“ Must you not crouching ask the boon  
Avarice is forced to give ;  
And hear them calculate how soon  
You'll die, how long can live ?

“ And must you not—Oh direst woe !—  
Seem grateful, bow and smile,  
Thank them from whom those blessings flow,  
Soothe, flatter, and beguile ?

“ And would you have me such as you ?

Me, from whose honest tongue

No sentence consciously untrue

From youth to age has sprung !

“ And would you court me to your home

In joyless prison pent ?

Me, when all kingdoms I can roam,

And find in all content !

“ What though I draw for scanty gain

Fresh water from the spring ;—

Did she, of Isaac loved, disdain

An equal load to bring ?

“ What though my clothes in squalid rags

Hang fluttering to my knee ;—

They breathe, like sea-weed on the crags,

The air of liberty.

“ Free as that buoyant breeze I rove,  
All nature's joys my own,  
See earth and sky, the clouds above,  
The rocks in masses thrown.

“ At summer's eve those rocks among  
I with the otter lie ;  
The sea-mew's cry my evening song,  
The wave my lullaby.

“ The moonbeams falling on my form,  
The spray that dews my hair,  
The breathing of the summer storm,  
All, all to me are fair.

“ And when in wintry nights I creep  
Beneath the sheltering boat,  
And feel my ice-bound fingers sleep,  
And doff my frozen coat,

“ What though I lack reviving food,  
    Though bare my aged form,  
‘Till life be o’er the freeman’s blood  
    Shall keep his bosom warm.

“ But frozen, stagnate, would it chill  
    In thy stern prison pent.  
Away ! I’ll keep my treasures still,  
    Peace, freedom, and content.”





# **WATLINGTON HILL :**

**A DESCRIPTIVE POEM.**

The two following poems, slight and imperfect as they are, require, perhaps even more than the rest of this little volume, the kind indulgence of the reader. They were written many years ago, and are inserted chiefly from a wish to preserve some sketch, however rude, of very beautiful scenery, and some memorial, however inadequate, of very dear and valuable friends.

## WATLINGTON HILL.



### I.

'Tis pleasant to dance in lordly hall  
When the merry harp is ringing ;  
'Tis sweet in the bower at evening's fall  
To list to the night-bird's singing ;  
'Tis lovely to view the autumnal hue  
As it gilds the woodland mountain ;  
Or when summer glows to pluck the rose  
And quaff from the sparkling fountain.  
But fatigue in pleasure's guise is clad ;  
And the song so sweet makes the light heart sad ;  
And autumn tells of joys that fly ;  
And summer's charms in languor die :

If ye would have all hope can bring,  
Take the first morn of early spring !  
If ye would warm your life-blood chill,  
Go course on Watlington's fair hill !

## II.

The mountain gale the vapour flings  
Aloft upon his giant wings :  
And now the sun in high career,  
Wakens a thousand dew-drops clear,  
That in their downy moss-couch sleep,  
Or from the trembling grass-top weep.  
O lovelier than the brightest gem  
That shines in princely diadem,  
How transient is thy sway ;  
Sportsmen and steeds, and hounds and hare,  
Hunters and hunted from thy lair  
Shall drive thee, diamond of the air,  
And sweep thy charms away.

And yet, in sooth, upon the hill  
Thy glittering place they better fill :  
    Upon the shelving mossy side,  
        And on the furze-clad steep,  
The impatient horsemen gaily ride,  
The gallant dogs reluctant bide,  
And ladies fair, though storms betide,  
    Their anxious station keep.

## III.

Greyhounds are there of noble name,  
Coursers who equal praise may claim,  
And many a bright and gentle dame.  
    Oh could my rustic string  
Their beauty and their feats proclaim,  
And give and steal the minstrel's fame  
    Of all, of each my harp should ring !  
But light as he the strain should spring  
    That sings the greyhound rare ;

And soft as beauty's plummy wing  
The lay that paints the fair ;  
Whilst harsh and rude the notes I fling,—  
Coursing nor beauty dare I sing,  
The greyhound nor the hare.  
Yet well each gentle maid may spy  
Her triumphs in her lover's eye ;  
And ye, kind sportsmen, well may claim  
For gallant dogs scarce-rivalled fame.  
And durst I sing, in venturous guise,  
Of ricks and turns, and falls and byes,  
And all the courser's mysteries,  
Then should the swan-necked *Nancy* show  
As spotless as her fur of snow ;  
Then should the *Sharks* successive reign  
And all their master's fame sustain ;  
Nor *Windsor* shame his breeding high ;  
Nor thou thy name, Northumbrian *Fly* ;  
Nor thou *Prince Hal*, thy name-sake old  
“ The nimble-footed madcap ” bold ;

Nor thou the meed thy mother won,  
My golden crested *Marmien* \*.

## IV.

Leave we them all : to stand awhile  
Upon the topmost brow,  
And mark how, many a lengthening mile,  
The landscape spreads below.  
Here let us stand ! The breezes chill  
A healthful freshness breathe,  
The blood with stirring quickness fill,  
And fancy's garlands aid to wreath.  
How pure, how transient is the storm !  
See in yon furze poor puss's form  
A vacant cradle seems,  
Rocked by the loud wind to and fro ;  
Whilst the coy primrose blooms below  
Nursed by the southern beams ;

\* Celebrated greyhounds belonging to different gentlemen who formed the party.

And overhead in richer gold  
The gorse's hardy flowers unfold  
Training wild wreaths most sweet, most fair,  
To hang above her mountain lair.

## V.

Methinks I too should love to dwell  
Within this lone and cloud-capped cell :  
With all around of vast and rude,—  
A wild romantic solitude ;  
With all below to charm the eye ;  
With nought above me but the sky.  
Here would I watch each sailing cloud  
Scudding along in grandeur proud ;  
And mark the varying shadows cast  
On down or fallow as it past ;  
Or view the sudden catching light  
Now part the shades and now unite ;  
Till noon's refulgent brightness spread  
Its glories o'er the mountain's head :



Then would I bend from my high place  
To gaze upon the horizon's space,  
A tract sublime of various grace.

## VI.

Yet first the charmed eye would greet  
The lowland home-scenes vallies sweet;  
Of wood and turf and field ;  
Where the snug cot, the lordly seat  
Like grandeur and contentment meet  
And mutual beauty yield.  
And first would trace the winding road  
Which through the beech-wood leads  
By red-cloaked maids and ploughmen trod,  
Rich wains and prancing steeds.  
And first admire those beechen trees,  
Whose upper branches in the breeze  
All bare and polished seem to freeze ;  
Whilst, feathered like an archer's barb,  
Each lower bough in saffron garb,

Catches the rain-drops as they fall  
And answers to the night-wind's call.  
Among those woods one chimney white  
Just glances in the southern light,  
Deep bosomed in the impervious glades  
The fairy bower of Britwell's shades \*.  
Is it the woodman's fair retreat  
Where merry children sport ?  
Or the rough keeper's jovial seat,  
Where hounds and huntsman frequent meet,  
And hold their sylvan court ?  
Is it the laugh of infants gay,  
Shaking the forest with their play,  
That wakes the echoes round ?  
Or trampling steeds at break of day,  
The noisy pack, the clarion's lay ?  
What wakes thy voice, coy echo, say ?  
It is a holier sound.

\* Britwell Nunnery. The retreat of several aged nuns, who were driven from France by the Revolution.

## VII.

There, from their native country driven,  
The nuns' sweet vespers rise to heaven.  
Exiles of France ! in early life  
They fled the world's tumultuous strife,  
To find within a convent's breast  
The present calm, the future blest.  
They sought for peace, and peace they found,  
Till impious Havock glaring round  
Of earth, of heaven the ties unbound,  
    And said, maids ye are free !  
But freedom's prostituted sound  
    To them was misery.  
Chased from their voluntary prison,  
They seemed as from some earthquake risen,  
Where all they loved, where all they knew  
Had vanished from their tear-dimmed view.  
Nor place to sit them down and pray,  
Nor friends, nor home, nor grave had they.

Sickening at war's tumultuous din  
They fled that clime of woe and sin ;  
And here they dwell, the pious band,  
Honoured and safe in Albion's land ;  
And though perchance a casual tear  
Fall for the convent once so dear,  
Yet sweet contentment's patient smile  
Shall grace each placid cheek the while ;  
Here, where they keep their holy vow,  
Here is their native country now :  
For here, though all unknown the tongue,  
The tenderest sound of welcome rung ;  
Here pity beams in every eye ;  
Here blest they live—more blest shall die.

## VIII.

From pious Brittwell pass we now  
At freedom's honoured shrine to bow

On Chalgrove's neighbouring field \* ;  
An undistinguished speck it seems  
Where scarce the sun's refulgent beams  
One spark of light can yield ;  
A common spot of earth, where grows  
In summer time the yellow corn ;  
Where now his grain the seedsman throws  
With careful hand from early morn ;  
Yet pauses midst his toil to tell  
That in that field bold Hampden fell.  
Hampden ! thy name from age to age  
The patriot heart shall fire ;  
The good, the fair, the brave, the sage  
All weep thy funeral pyre.  
Thy very enemy confest  
The virtues of thy noble breast † ;  
Hard as it is amid the jar  
Of falling thrones, of civil war

\* The spot where Hampden fell.

† See the character of Hampden in Lord Clarendon's History.

To judge of man's inconstant state,  
Even he confessed thee good and great.  
How was the Stuart fallen, when thou  
Didst brave his power with dauntless brow !  
How raised when Falkland by him stood  
As great as thou, as wise, as good !  
Oh who, by equal fame misled,  
Who shall the righteous cause decide,  
When for his king Lord Falkland bled,  
When Hampden for his country died !

## IX.

How boldly yonder cloud so bright  
Throws out that clump of trees ;  
Scarce, till it crost the ethereal light,  
Like the wren's plume on snow-ridge white,  
The keenest eye that wood could seize.  
'Tis distant Farrington I deem ;  
And far below Thames' silver stream

Thrids through the fair romantic bridge  
Of Wallingford's old town ;  
And high above the Whittenham ridge  
Seems the gay scene to crown.  
But what is that, which to the right,  
Upon the horizon's utmost verge,  
A fairy picture glitters bright,  
Like sea-foam on the crested surge ?  
Is it the varying fleecy cloud  
That takes in sport the figure proud,  
Where domes and turrets seem to rise,  
And spiry steeples mock our eyes ?  
No ; real is that lovely scene,  
'Tis England's boast, 'tis learning's Queen,  
'Tis Oxford. Not the unlettered maid  
May dare approach her hallowed shade ;  
Nor chant a requiem to each name  
That wakened there to deathless fame ;  
Nor bid the Muse's blessing rest  
For ever in her honoured breast.

## X.

Oh, when I dared the Muse to name  
Did it not wake my spirit's flame?  
Did it not guide my eye, my soul  
To yonder distant shadowy knoll?  
And whisper in each joyous thrill  
'Tis Milton's home, 'tis Forest Hill\*?  
Yes, there he lived, and there he sung,  
When life and hope and love were young;  
There, grace and genius at his side,  
He won his half-disdainful bride;  
And there the lark "in spite of sorrow,"  
Still at his "window bade good morrow  
"Through the sweet-briar, or the vine,  
Or the twisted eglantine."

\* The village from which Milton married his first wife, Miss Mary Powel, and the supposed scene of *L'Allegro*. For a very interesting account of this interesting spot the reader is referred to a letter from Sir William Jones to Lady Spencer, contained in Lord Teignmouth's edition of Sir William Jones's Works.



Oh happy hill ! thy summer vest  
Lives in his richest colouring drest ;  
Oh happy hill ! thou saw'st him blest.  
Thou saw'st him blest, the greatest man  
That ever trod life's grovelling span—  
Shakspeare alone with him could try,  
Undazzled and untired the sky.  
And thou didst view his blooming charm,  
That eagle plumed like the dove,  
Whose very sleeping grace could warm  
The Italian maiden's heart to love \*.  
Thou saw'st him in his happier hour,  
When life was love, and genius power ;

\* In Mr. Todd's *Life of Milton* there is a wild romantic story of an Italian lady of high birth, who in travelling through England saw Milton, then very young, asleep upon a bank. Enamoured of his beauty, she wrote some verses expressive of her admiration, laid them on his hand, and left him still sleeping. This incident is said to have occasioned his travels in Italy, where he hoped to meet his unknown fair one ; and to have been the first cause of his assiduous cultivation of Italian literature, afterwards so dear to him for its own sake.

When at his touch the awakened string  
All joyous hailed the laughing spring ;  
And, like the sun, his radiant eyes  
Glanced on thy earthly Paradise.  
Thou didst not see those eyes so bright  
For ever quenched in cheerless night ;  
Thou didst not hear his anguished lays  
Of " evil tongues and evil days ;"  
Thou saw'st but his gay youth, fair spot—  
Happiest for what thou sawest not.  
And happy still ! Though in thy sod  
No blade remain by Milton trod ;  
Though the sweet gale that sweeps thy plain  
No touch of Milton's breath retain ;  
Yet here the bards of later days  
Shall roam to view thee and to praise.  
Here Jones, ere yet his voice was fame,  
A lone romantic votary came ;  
He too is gone, untimely gone !  
But lured by him full many a one

Shall tread thy hill on pilgrimage ;  
And minstrel, patriot, or sage,  
Who bent not o'er his Indian bier,  
Shall mourn him with his Milton here :  
For till our English tongue be dead,  
From freedom's breast till life be fled,  
Till Poesy's quick pulse be still  
None shall forsake thee, Forest Hill.

## XI.

Few are the scenes of power to chain  
    The rapt enthusiast's mind,  
Like that where Milton's wondrous strain  
Still seems to linger o'er the plain  
    Or whisper in the wind.  
Not pent within the crowded town,  
Where meanness sweeps away renown ;  
But fresh, and innocent, and fair,  
As if the mighty master there  
Still flung his witch-notes on the air.

Yet taste and fancy's visions gay  
Life's deeper feelings shun,  
And fade at friendship's light away,  
Like stars before the sun.  
The spirits of the honour'd dead  
Before one living form have fled :  
For here beneath fair Sherburn's shade \*  
My Zosia dwelt, my Polish maid,  
My friend most tender and most true,  
My friend ere friendship's name we knew ;  
The partner of those blissful hours  
When the world seemed one bank of flowers,  
Life but a summer's cloudless morn,  
And love a rose without a thorn.  
Fleeting as that illusive day,  
Was friendship's joy, was Zosia's stay ;

\* Sherburn Lodge, the seat of the late Countess Dowager of Macclesfield, under whose care Zosia Choynowska, the early and beloved friend of the author was placed for education.

For when o'er her majestic form  
Youth shed his mantling roses warm,  
When beauty saw her work matured,  
And grandeur awed whom grace allured,  
The imperious mandate harshly bore  
The finished charmer from our shore;  
Bore her from friendship, bliss, and love,  
Envy, neglect, contempt to prove  
From hearts, who frozen as their clime,  
Would antedate the work of time,  
And nip her beauties in their prime.  
Oh, ever-loved, return again !  
Return ! and soon the blooming train  
Of childish friends shall meet to share  
Thy soft caress, my Polish fair !  
Again shall view thy sparkling eye  
And Empress-form admiringly ;  
Each emulously crowding round ;  
Each listening for one silver sound ;

And thou to all, with Queen-like smile,  
Wilt sweet attention shew the while,  
Of kindness full and courtesy ;  
Though one alone,—Oh happiest she !—  
Scarce from thy tongue shall greeting hear,  
Or find thy love, but in thy tear.  
The dews of heaven fall not so sweet  
As friendship's tears with joy replete ;  
Haste on my breast such dews to rain,  
My ever-loved, return again !

## XII.

The pause hath checked my spirit glad,—  
Deep doubting hope is ever sad ;  
But sadder thoughts now intervene  
To cloud that sweet and tranquil scene.  
Direr than absence is the foe  
Who waits to give the fatal blow ;

Weeping within that mansion fair  
Sits filial love, Death hovers there.  
He comes not now to lead the bloom  
Of youth to an undreaded tomb ;  
He comes not now to tame the pride  
Of matron health confirmed and tried ;  
Not towering man provokes his rage ;  
'Tis woman, feebleness, and age.  
And yet nor beauty early cropped,  
Nor manhood's strength untimely dropped,  
Could waken more regretful sighs  
Or more with sorrow blend surprise.  
For she, his noble prey, had stood  
Like an old oak in Sherburn wood.  
In deepest verdure richly decked  
Whose ample branches waved unchecked ;  
And though dead boughs commingling grew,  
Abrupt and bare, of darker hue ;  
Though weeds minute and yellow moss  
With varied tints the bark emboss ;—

Yet lovely was its pleasant shade ;  
Lovely the trunk with moss inlaid ;  
Lovely the long-haired lichens grey ;  
Lovely its pride and its decay.  
Such Macclesfield thou wast ! Old Time  
Himself had spared thy beamy prime  
Uninjured, as on Greece's strand  
He views the works of Phidias' hand,  
And bids the sun, the dews, the air  
Perfection's noblest image spare.  
So time had passed o'er thee, bright dame ;  
All changed, but thou wast still the same,  
Still skilled to give the fading flower  
More brilliant life by painting's power ;  
Still skilled the nimble steel to ply  
With quick inventive industry ;  
Still skilled to frame the moral rhyme,  
Or point with Gospel truths the lay sublime.  
And rarer yet, 'mid age's frost  
The fire of youth thou had'st not lost ;



Still at another's bliss could'st glow ;  
Still melt to hear another's woe ;  
Still give the poor man's cares relief ;  
Still bend to soothe the mourner's grief.  
Though near a century's course had sped  
And bleached thy venerable head,  
By age's vice and woe untold  
Thy years remained—thou wast not old !  
And so to live, and so to die,  
Is endless rare felicity.  
But there is one \*, whose ready tear  
Bedews thy pale cheek on thy bier ;  
One shrinking from the admiring gaze,  
Whom I may love but dare not praise.  
Oh friend of Zosia ! friend of all  
Whom misery, pain, and want enthrall !  
Be comforted. Though ne'er again  
Thy mother's hand thy hand shall strain,

\* The Right Honourable Lady Mary Parker ; now, alas ! also.  
dead.

Though never shall she feel thy cares,  
Congenial joys her spirit shares,—  
Congenial, yet superior, given  
By sister Angels in her native Heaven.  
Oh who would weep the loved-one dead  
When death is bliss ! Be comforted.

## XIII.

Why thus in fond though vain relief  
With weeping praise perpetuate grief ?  
Why, on the dead, the absent Muse,  
And joy from present friends refuse ?  
Why dwell on yonder mournful dome,  
And shun those friends' delightful home ?  
'Twere hard to sing thy varying charm,  
Thou Cottage, Mansion, Village, Farm \*,

\* Watlington Farm, the residence of the late William Hayward, Esq. It is saddening to reflect that of the circle of friends for whose amusement this little poem was originally written, scarcely one now remains alive.

Thou beautiful epitome  
Of all that useful is and rare,  
Where Comfort sits with smiling air,  
And laughing Hospitality.  
'Twere hard to sing,—and harder still  
The dearer charms those halls that fill.  
'Twere hard to sing,—the sun is low,  
Quick to the lovely Farm we go,  
Its strongest spells to find ;  
And clustered round the blazing fire,  
When Beauty, Music, Wit inspire,  
Oh they that learn not to admire  
Dull must they be, and deaf, and blind !



# **WESTON GROVE.**

**A DESCRIPTIVE POEM.**



## WESTON GROVE \*.



### I.

Who hath not met in meadows gay

Th' illusive touch of morn,

The freshness of the dewy spray,

The matin lark's melodious lay,

The brightness of the herald ray,

Which tells that day is born ?

Who hath not sought the mellow glow

The topaz-tinted beam

Whose lambent glories seem to grow

Lapping the woods above, below,

In evening's golden stream ?

\* The beautiful seat of William Chamberlayne, Esq. M.P. on the  
Southampton Water.

Who hath not marked the river pale  
Just gleaming through night's misty veil ?  
Some scenes morn's chastened beams require ;  
And some rich evening's tints of fire ;  
    And some the silvery moon :  
The fairest still, like ladies bright,  
Look loveliest in the clearest light !—  
Ye who would gaze from Weston's height  
    Go seek its shade at noon.

## II.

'Tis now the very hour to see  
That scene of wide-spread witchery :  
For now on Weston's verdant side  
    Meridian radiance straying,  
Seems through the colonnade to glide,  
Or 'mid the tufted arbours slide  
Like ringlets on the snowy pride  
    Of beauty's bosom playing.



Whilst o'er the pure and deep blue sky  
The fleecy clouds like smoke-wreaths fly,  
Borne lightly on the sweetest gale  
That ever filled the swelling sail.  
Bright as the sun that landscape proud  
Extends ; and various as the cloud.  
I might as soon describe a dream  
As tell where falls each golden beam ;  
As soon might reckon up the sand,  
Sweet Weston, on thy sea-beat strand,  
As count each beauty there ;  
Hills which the purple heath-bell shield,  
Forest and village, lawn and field,  
Ocean and earth, with all they yield  
Of glorious or of fair.

## III.

Yet e'en amid that brilliant scene  
Close to the left one wood so green

Fixes the wandering eye :

Fringing the margin of the waves,  
Southampton's tide its verdure laves,  
Whilst one small fort the fury braves

Of wind, and sea, and sky.

Even to behold that solemn shade,

" For melancholy musing made,"

The pensive heart would inly say

There the world-weary wretch may stray,

There best in Nature's temple pray.

And there in Netley's mouldering cells

The solitary nightbird dwells ;

There in each moss-grown stone we trace

The pious tenants of the place ;

There in each lingering footstep tread

Upon the unmonumented dead.

Yes, image of Rome's fallen power,

This, this is Netley's hallowed bower !

And it is holy still. Each wall

And silent aisle and roofless hall,

The chapel, where luxuriant trees  
Wave proudly in the sighing breeze,  
Each gothic arch and fretted nich,  
And venerable window rich,  
Where deftly ivy wreaths supply  
The light and graceful tracery,  
Each stone decayed, and tottering stair,  
Each mark of ruined grandeur there  
All to the charmed heart whisper prayer.

Methinks that e'en from Netley's gloom

To look upon the tide

Seems gazing from the shadowy tomb

On life in all its pride.

And aching with the o'erpowering light

The mind shrinks dazzled from the sight.

#### IV.

Yet soon the buoyant spirit springs

On hope and joy's exulting wings

That lovely wave to view ;  
Its shores with softest verdure green,  
Seats, cots, and villages between,  
And graceful boats and vessels sheen  
Spotting its surface blue.  
And now that brighter beauty gleams,  
From the sweet air and sparkling beams,  
How pleasant 'twere to tempt the breeze  
And on these smooth undangerous seas  
In mimic danger ride ;  
To hear the freshening summer gale,  
Whistling and flapping in the sail,  
And mock the feathery billows pale  
Dash o'er the rocking side ;  
Whilst, gilding strand, and wood, and ground,  
The glorious sunbeams dance around,  
And turn to lovely mockery  
The chiding of the angry sea.

## V.

'Tis hard such cheerful scenes to leave :  
But sweeter far it is at eve,  
When the vexed billows cease to heave,  
    When sleeps th' untroubled air,  
Upon the glassy wave to glide,  
Scarce conscious of the gentle tide,  
That ripples still the boat beside,  
    So silent and so fair :  
So silent, that the light oar seems  
To break on evening's fairy dreams ;  
So fair, that e'en where brightest streams  
    The moon's long radiance o'er the flood,  
Where Calshot spreads its nightly beams  
    Or cottage fires peep through the wood,  
Though lovely every starlike ray  
They match not that small pearly spray.  
Oh, 'tis in such a moonlight hour  
That Music best asserts her power !

Then if the mellow flute prolong  
Some wandering note, some artless song,  
Renewed and broken like the strains  
When the lorn nightingale complains ;  
Or woman's voice such sweetness pour  
As soothes the Adriatic shore,  
What time the rapt Venetian woos  
The magic of his Tasso's muse ;  
Then more than passion's strong controul  
It lulls, it charms, it lifts the soul ;  
It strikes the chords with feeling fraught ;  
It stirs the living spring of thought ;  
And to the syren fancy flings  
Dreams of unutterable things,  
Forms, which like summer lightning fly,  
And tints, which like the rainbow die.

## VI.

Oh gentlest wave ! upon thy breast  
Pleasure's light burthens love to rest,

Mixed only with the lazy raft,  
Or the laborious fisher's craft.  
Thee war defiles not, blessed wave !  
No, though the very drops that lave  
Thy peaceful shores have bathed the side  
    Of many a ship of war ;  
Though thou hast viewed our navy ride  
In peerless triumph o'er the tide,  
Thou saw'st unstained the ensanguined pride,  
    Thou heard'st the guns afar.  
Spithead's long moving forest here  
    Just breaks the cloudy line,  
As gleams the grass-top's slender spear  
In horizontal sunset clear,  
    As taper and as fine.  
And yonder ship in proud array  
    That by St. Helen's floats,  
Yon Indiaman with pennons gay  
    Her barges and her boats ;

She scarcely to the straining eye  
Seems more of space to occupy  
Than one small flake of gossamer  
That flies ere one can say 'tis there !

## VII.

That ship were beautiful to see  
In all her gorgeous majesty :  
Her streamers glittering in the sun,  
    Her topsails to the breezes bent,—  
A Queen let loose her course to run,  
    And rein each stubborn element.  
But many a cheek is pale with fears,  
And many an eye is wet with tears  
    That gazes on her charms ;—  
The mother, to whose aching breast  
The livelong night her boy was prest,  
    Now folds her childless arms  
Condemned through long long years to trace  
The anguish of that last embrace.



There the betrothed maiden caught  
The fond, the parting vow,  
Scarce had she owned one tender thought,  
Scarce breathed a sigh till now ;  
Till now that on the crowded deck  
She hung upon her lover's neck.  
'Twas chiefly then the parting pain  
That rent her heart, that pierced her brain ;  
But soon the fear so undefined  
So terrible will fill her mind ;  
And then the very lightest breeze  
That strips the sere autumnal trees ;  
The flickering rack ; the sun-gilt cloud  
Hung in midsky, a column proud ;  
The wave as calm as infant's breath ;  
All to her soul shall speak of death ;—  
A death unblest by mortal knell,  
A fate which none returns to tell,  
Like theirs who in the Blenheim fell.

## VIII.

Such thoughts, though all uncalled they dart,

As shades in moonlight forests start,

Yet to the eye and to the heart

They dim the ocean's smile.

Where shall the saddened spirit rest ?

Where, but upon thy verdant breast,

Moulded by Grace, by Nature drest,

Most loved most lovely Isle !

Fair Isle ! thou lingerest on the eye

Like the sweet world of Faëry,

Which brightens in the Italian beam

When Reggio's towers reflected gleam \*.

For all along thy lengthening coast

From Ryde's romantic town,

To where, like threatening giants tost,

The beetling Needles frown ;

\* It can scarcely be necessary to mention that I allude to the supposed operations of the Fata Morgana in the Faro di Messina.

Each lonely cot, or woody bay,  
Or silver stream, or village gay,  
Has caught the sweetly blended charm  
Of distance soft, of sunshine warm ;  
A bloomy green of shadowy hue,  
Like meadows pale with morning dew ;  
Outline so tender, so unfelt  
It seems in sea and sky to melt ;  
Colours, which language cannot teach,  
Graces, which art despairs to reach.

## IX.

Short distance seems to intervene  
'Twixt that enchanted land,  
And the long variegated scene,  
Where, forming tiny harbours green  
Mid mimic promontories seen,  
New Forest stretches to the strand.

## X.

All love Ytene's pleasant shades ;  
Yet rapidly the forest fades,  
As, circling still from left to right,  
Southampton bursts upon the sight.  
How proudly on that lovely town  
This lovelier villa glances down,  
And stoops to art from nature's crown !  
Castle and street, and quay and boat,  
Blent in one busy picture float,  
Gay, laughing, brilliant, debonair,  
As if nor woe nor want nor care,  
Nor aught but bliss could harbour there ;  
Though still the walls of antique mould  
Tell the proud tale of days of old :

They saw him burst from youthful sport,  
They echoed to his mailed tread,  
Who England's noblest battle led,  
And won a realm at Agincourt.

## XI.

Is there a better, brighter fame,  
Than waits on British Harry's name ?  
Embalmed in history's stately page  
The hero of the heroic age ;  
By Shakspeare's tricky fancy drest  
Lord of the sword and of the jest ;  
The deftest knight at joust or dance,  
The conqueror of conquering France !  
Though centuries have rolled away  
His fame is fresh as yesterday.  
But why should truant fancy sing  
Through the bright noontide hours,  
Of glittering town and warlike king,  
When she might wake the trembling string  
To Weston's peaceful bowers ?  
Yet, lovely Weston, need I tell  
That art's assembled beauties dwell  
Beneath thy classic dome ?

The unmouldering pride of Greece's land,  
The glories of the Ausonian strand,  
The rival gems of Britain's hand,

All here have found a home  
With woman's taste, and man's fine sense,  
And shy retiring eloquence.

Oh why from Fame doth Genius fly  
And shun the world's admiring eye ?

'Tis ever so. He towers still

An eagle on his aërie hill ;

Or, like the golden beetle, glows

Close nestled in his mansion rose.

Whilst we, the ungifted many, stray,

Like chattering jays, from spray to spray ;

Or like the gnats in evening sky,

Wind the small horn of Poesy.—

THE END.



